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THE
EVOLUTION OF RELIGION

THE GIFFORD LECTURES DELIVERED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS IN SESSIONS 1890-91 AND 1891-92

BY

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LECTURE FIRST.

THE CONTRAST OF OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE RELIGION.

The two Types of Religion and their Union in Christianity—Goethe's View of the Opposition—Matthew Arnold's Contrast of Hellenism and Hebraism—Re-appearance of the Opposition in Modern Life—Pope's Expression of Pantheism, and the Objections brought against it—Pure Monotheism and the Objections brought against it.

IN my lectures during last session, I endeavoured to set before you a view of religion as one of the three great factors or elements in our conscious life, which, therefore, like all the other elements or factors, is subjected to a continuous process of development, and only in that process gradually comes to manifest its real meaning and purport. I tried to show that, just as a consciousness of the object and the subject, of the world without and the self within, must be supposed to exist in all rational beings, so in all rational beings there is at least a dawning consciousness of the unity presuppposed in this difference, of the universal which originates and transcends this elementary distinction of our life

As truly as it is part of our nature to look *outwards* and fill our life with objective interests, as truly as it is part of our nature to look *inwards*—to return upon ourselves and to become conscious of an inner life of our own in which we are separated from all others—so it is part of our nature, an immanent necessity of our rational being, to look *upwards*, and to regard our whole life, inner and outer, as based upon and circumscribed by a Power, in whom we and all things live and move and have our being. Hence the consciousness of God is as near to us, as necessary to us, as the consciousness of the world or of the self; nay, in a sense, it has a higher necessity than either, and we are nearer to God than to ourselves: for the consciousness of self rests upon the idea of God, as at once its first presupposition and its last end and goal. All our life is a progress through the world and through ourselves to the God from whom we come, in whom we are, to whom we tend.

Yet, equally true is it from another point of view, that the religious consciousness, the distinct consciousness of this divine unity, is what is farthest from us, what we attain last of all, and what it is most difficult for us fully to realise. We look outward before we look inward, and we look inward before we look upward. We are at home with the world before we attend to the self within, and we

are at home with ourselves, before we learn that we cannot be true to ourselves except by rising above ourselves. Thus the process is long and circuitous, though the end is implied in the beginning. It is the paradox of development that what is first in nature is last in genesis, and that nothing is so hard for the intelligence to grasp as that which is the very principle of its own life. This, indeed, must not be interpreted as meaning that, at any stage of our experience, one of the elements of our spiritual life can be presented to us altogether apart from the others. What it means is only that, according to a law of development which I have already tried to illustrate, all the elements of man's consciousness are at first presented in the lowest form of that consciousness. Thus the idea of God cannot remain absent from any human intelligence. An inchoate feeling, an anticipatory idea, must trouble the simplicity of sense with the hint of an existence which sense cannot measure, and confuse the directness of appetite with the dream of some higher kind of satisfaction. But such existence and such satisfaction cannot as yet be represented in any form except that of sensuous externality. And it needs a long process of culture ere that form can be so idealised by imagination and generalised by the growing power of reflexion, as to produce even the higher forms of Polytheism.

A still longer process is needed to prepare for that recoil upon self by which man rends himself from nature and learns to detect in himself, in his own inward life, that 'light which never was on land or sea'; to discover in self-consciousness and in conscience the God whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain. With this subjective movement the moral becomes for the first time separated from the natural, the spiritual bond of man to man from the tie of kinship. God ceases to be the natural father of a race, and becomes the spiritual source of a law which is one and the same for all spiritual beings.

This recoil upon the inner life, with the consequent substitution of a subjective for an objective religion, is a process which we see taking place in different nations of the ancient world, indeed, in all nations which have survived so long as to enter upon a certain stage of civilisation. It showed itself in India in the rise of Buddhism, which was the subjective counterpart of the religion of the Vedas, or rather of the Pantheism in which that religion ended. It showed itself again in Greece in the subjective philosophies which arose in the decay of the religion of beauty; and from the Greeks it was communicated to the Romans and to all the other nations which took part in the civilisation of the Roman empire. In all these cases, however, it was in a sense a phenomenon of decay; it accompanied

the breaking up of a whole system of life which had been based upon objective religion. It came to nations which were already loaded with the weight of a great inheritance from the past, with a burden of traditionary beliefs and institutions which no longer satisfied them, but from which they could not wholly free themselves. To one people only did it come at a comparatively early stage of its national culture, as the vitalising principle which bound them together as a nation and separated them from all other nations. Thus the Hebrews became a 'peculiar people,' whose peculiarity consisted just in this, that they worshipped a universal and spiritual God. It was the early growth of subjective religion on Jewish soil, and its identification with the consciousness of nationality, that gave to the Jews their special place in the religious history of the world. The violence with which at a comparatively early date they, so to speak, tore up the natural roots of human life, in order to plant in their place the idea of an absolute law of divine justice and to make this idea the sole bond of social unity, turned them into the permanent representatives of the subjective principle of religion and morality; whereas in Greece and Rome that principle showed itself as a purifying power only in the private life of individuals, who were like voices crying in the wilderness to the decaying

society around them. The Hebrew literature has thus become what we may call the classical literature of 'ethical monotheism,'—its unique and perfect expression, not for philosophers or men of letters, but for the general conscience and consciousness of men. The troubled utterance of sorrow and remorse, in which the soul seeks to be delivered from the world and from itself, the indignant protest of the conscience against the wrongs of nature and fortune, the bitter cry of humanity for justice and mercy, and the yearning voice of aspiration towards the infinite, of longing for goodness and for God, have never spoken in such persuasive or commanding tones as in the Prophets and Psalmists of Israel. And it is just because of this that the Jewish religion became the immediate preparation for the religion of unity and reconciliation, in which God is worshipped, not as a power which reveals itself only to perception in the outward world, nor as a power which manifests itself solely to thought in the inward silence of the heart, but as *above* both and *in* both alike.

It is my intention in the following lectures to trace the process by which the Jewish religion of subjectivity gradually worked itself out, and prepared the way for the higher synthesis of objective and subjective religion in Christianity. But it may clear our way, if, in the first place, I go back for a moment on

the path which we have already followed. In this lecture, therefore, I shall endeavour to illustrate in a slightly different aspect, the great contrast of objective and subjective religion, of which I have spoken as the two main stages in the development of the highest religion.

In a series of epigrams by Goethe on the wide subject, "God and the World," we find him expressing two views of the nature of religion; or, perhaps, we might rather say that he gives us mottoes for the two great types of the religious sentiment. The first type is characterised in the often quoted words: "What were a God who only gave the world a push from without, or let it spin round His finger? I look for a God, who moves the world from within, who fosters nature in Himself, Himself in nature; so that naught of all that lives and moves and has its being in Him, ever forgets His force or His spirit."[1] In these words we find expressed that which is usually called the pantheistic view of religion; and also that dislike, which naturally goes with pantheism, of the idea of an extraneous world-creator and governor, who arranges arbitrarily the course of nature and the life

[1] Was wär' ein Gott, der nur von aussen stiesse,
Im Kreis das All am Finger laufen liesse!
Ihm ziemt's, die Welt im Innern zu bewegen,
Natur in Sich, Sich in Natur zu hegen,
So dass, was in Ihm lebt und webt und ist,
Nie Seine Kraft, nie Seinen Geist vermisst.

of man, but does not realise himself in either as a living, organising, self-manifesting power. This kind of religious sentiment is one which is often expressed by Goethe, and it may even be said to be the animating principle of his best poetry. It is the source of a certain antagonism to Christianity, and especially to the Jewish element in it, which is traceable in many of his works. Thus in writing to Jacobi, who in his essay on Spinoza had maintained—as Dr. Martineau maintains now—that a God immanent in the world is no God at all, Goethe declares that to him such a doctrine appears to be flat blasphemy, and that while others call Spinoza half an atheist, *he* feels bound to praise him as "the most theistic and the most Christian of writers." In another letter to Jacobi, Goethe expresses the same idea in a humorous analogy, which is not without an element of seriousness. "The truth is that I am one of the goldsmiths of Ephesus who has spent his whole life in contemplating, admiring, and worshipping the wonderful temple of the goddess; and who cannot but feel it painful when any apostle seeks to impose on his fellow-citizens another and, indeed, a formless God."

Thus to Goethe, the modern Greek, as to the ancient Greeks of whom St. Paul spoke, the cross seemed, at times at least, to be foolishness. Yet, in an epigram which immediately follows the one which I have just quoted, Goethe gives expression to that side of

religion, or that kind of religious sentiment, which he seemed thus to reject. "In our inner life also," he declares, "there is a universe. Hence the laudable custom of mankind that every one calls the Best that he knows by the name of God. To this God he makes over heaven and earth; Him he worships and serves, and Him, if it be possible, he loves."[1] What we are here told is that the ideal, and especially the moral ideal, is, by a 'laudable custom of mankind' taken as the revelation of the Divine Being to whom all power on heaven and earth is to be attributed. And this is regarded by Goethe as a 'laudable custom,' in spite of the fact that it must to some extent make us sever God from nature and history, and look upon Him as manifested rather in the 'inner universe,' *i.e.* in that ideal which our desires, hopes, and aspirations oppose to the world as it is, or, at least, as it at first seems to be. These desires, hopes, and aspirations, he appears to admit, are to be regarded as a manifestation, and, indeed, as a higher manifestation of the divine principle than can be found in the world of outward experience. *Their* prophecies may be truer than history, because they contain

[1] Im Innern ist ein Universum auch
Daher der Völker löblicher Gebrauch,
Dass jeglicher das Beste was er kennt,
Er Gott, ja Seinen Gott benennt,
Ihm Himmel und Erden ubergiebt,
Ihn fürchtet und, wo möglich, liebt.

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something more of the divine than history has expressed as yet, or, perhaps, than it ever can fully express.

It would appear then that Goethe recognises two different types of religion: on the one hand, a religion which rests in God as revealed in nature and man,—revealed, not, indeed, to one who abides by superficial phenomena, but to one who regards these phenomena as symbols of an absolute and infinite Being. To this contemplative religion the divine is everywhere immediately present. "As far as the ear, as far as the eye can reach, thou findest nothing strange, nothing but the likenesses of Him; and the highest fire-flight of thy spirit never lacks image or symbol to body Him forth. It draws thee on, farther and farther it carries thee, and all the path thou dost travel puts on a garment of beauty. No more dost thou number, no more dost thou measure, for every step is in the infinite." So Goethe sings the divine beauty of the world, as it reveals itself to the contemplative imagination of the poet, whose sacred function it is, as it were, to re-echo the judgment of the Creator upon His work—that 'it is very good.' But Goethe had discovered that there is another religion—a religion not of rest and joyful contemplation, but of struggle, and hope, and aspiration; a religion which sets man in antagonism to the actual world, and commits him to an endless effort to make

it conform to the demands of his own spirit; a religion which cannot be reconciled with the world, except by regarding the world as a means to realise something better than itself. For this religion, the highest is not without but within; the authentic voice of God is not in the beauty and brightness of the external kingdom of nature. Rather, if it sought God without at all, it would seek Him in the darkness and tumult of the elemental powers, in "fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy wind fulfilling His word."[1] But, like Elijah, it rejects all these to find that voice in the inward demand for justice and truth, in the indignant recoil of the conscience against that which is foul and cruel, in the unconquerable longing of the soul for a world regenerated by mercy and love. If *it* is to believe in a God, it must believe that these feelings are prophetic, and that everything which seems to oppose and thwart them is but an appearance that is destined to pass away. It must believe that wickedness is weakness, and that right is might; that, as it has been expressed epigrammatically, "one with God is a majority," that 'the stars in their courses fight against' the wicked, and that he who is for the good cause can never be really defeated. Its creed is the creed of Carlyle: "Await the issue: in all battles, if you await the issue, each fighter is prospered according to his right. His right and his might, at the close of

[1] Psalms cxlviii. 8.

the account, are one and the same. He has fought with all his might, and in exact proportion to his right he has prevailed. His very death is no victory over him: he dies indeed, but his work lives. The cause thou fightest for, in so far as it is true, so far and no farther, but precisely so far, is sure of victory."

Now it is obvious that we have here a fundamental antinomy of the religious consciousness, which is as wide as the moral antinomy between what *is* and what *ought to be*; and which shows itself not only in the fluctuations of the religious feeling of individuals, but also, on the great scale of history, in the opposition of the two great classes of pre-Christian religions, and even in the conflict and alternate predominance of two opposite tendencies in the Christian religion itself. In this point of view we may regard all objective religions as, in a sense, pantheistic; for it is their predominant tendency to rest in that which *is*. For, as we saw in a former lecture, the ultimate form—the *euthanasia* or expiring voice of such religion—is an all-levelling pantheism, which, in reaching after the infinite, goes beyond all special finite objects, even the most comprehensive, and merges them all in the one substance, or force, or spirit, and which has no command for the individual except to forget himself, and contemplate God, and be at peace. On the other hand, we may regard all subjective religion as finding its typical expression in that 'ethical monotheism,'

which hears God's voice only, or mainly, in the categorical imperative of a law of righteousness, and which commits man to an endless war with nature and circumstance, and an endless effort to realise the kingdom of God upon earth. No greater antithesis could be conceived than that which exists between these two religious attitudes: between the attitude of the contemplative Hindoo saint, and that of the Israelite trusting in the "sword of the Lord and of Gideon"; or even between that chastened joy in the riches and freedom of finite existence which we find in Pindar, and that divine discontent with the present, and that inspired hope of the future which breathe through the prophecies of Isaiah. There seems at first no way of binding together such fundamental oppositions of thought. For, on the one side, we find the religious mind laying all its emphasis on the idea that God is immanent in the world; that, indeed, the world is nothing but the garment of deity; and that, therefore, its apparent imperfection and evil exists only *for us*,—in so far as we fail to see the unity, which underlies all its difference and change and which is continually bringing them back to itself. And, on the other side, we find the religious mind dwelling on the idea of God as a transcendent Being, who separates Himself from all the creatures He has made—from nature as its Creator, and from man as his stern and righteous Judge; and we find it regard-

ing the whole process of human life in the light of an ideal which condemns it as imperfect and evil.

We may illustrate this contrast in another way. An eminent writer has said that the two great factors in modern life are Hebraism and Hellenism. But to make such an assertion correct, we must at once generalise and narrow it. We must regard Hellenism as the representative of all objective religions, in so far as they have a common pantheistic basis; while we must regard Hebraism as the general representative of subjective religion, the religion of moral obligation and moral aspiration. And, moreover, we must remember that we have not now the direct collision of these opposites; but that, in modern life, the reconciling principle of Christianity is ever mediating between the two, and reducing their antagonism to the relative opposition of different elements or organs in one life. With these modifications, however, we may admit that Matthew Arnold's saying represents a truth; and by considering the contrasted defects and merits of the two types of religion, and even the different accusations which their adherents are wont to bring against each other, we may help ourselves to discern more clearly the meaning of the different tendencies which compete and co-operate in our own lives. For this purpose it will not be necessary to take more than a very general view of the religions in question.

Religions of the Hellenic type dwelt in the world.

They were at one with the social life and politics of the nations among whom they prevailed. As religions of the poetic sense, they welcomed the aid of art. They were tolerant of interests and pursuits other than their own, rarely intolerant even of the science and philosophy which destroyed them. They consecrated the bonds of national life and made patriotism one with piety. But, as they mingled together the natural and the spiritual, they were defective in purifying moral influence. They did not awake a clear consciousness of the distinction between the lower and the higher nature of man; or, if they did, they 'healed the hurt' of his spirit 'slightly.' Their highest devotion was a worship of the Eternal, the Unchanging, the Aesthetic Ideal; not of a 'just God and a Saviour.' When their influence was at its highest point, they led men to seek for that which is true, for that which *is*, and to rest in resignation to its absolute necessity. Hebraism, on the other hand, took its stand on the spirituality of God, as lifted in His holiness above all His creatures. As a consequence, it emphasised the contrast between that which *is* and that which *ought to be*, and called forth a desire for purity and holiness, such as was unknown to any other race. Its stern commands awoke in its adherents a consuming zeal for righteousness which refused to make any terms with evil, and saved them as by fire from the polluting compromises of heathenism. On the other hand,

it was narrow, unspeculative, often fanatical. In its exclusive regard for divine holiness it tended to intolerance and jealous hatred of almost every civilising influence. The monotonous intensity of its piety was unfavourable to any exercise of the intelligence or of the imagination, which could not be made directly subservient to religious purposes. It allowed only one channel in which the higher life of man might flow. It often put so wide a division between God and His creatures that all interest in earthly things became profane in its eyes; and it could not allow either Art or Science to have any independent activity of its own. Hence, when Art and Science did make their way into a monotheistic nation, they generally came in as enemies, bringing religious corruption and moral laxity in their train. There seemed to be no middle state for monotheistic piety: when it did not rise to the highest, it sank to the lowest. If its adherents were not saints, they became sensualists. Thus, during the time when the Jewish religion was showing its highest purity and power in the prophets, it had to struggle for existence against a sensual and immoral idolatry; and when that time was past, it sank into the formal correctness and legalism of the Pharisee, who lived for the saving of his soul and to whom every other interest was sinful. Pure Hebraism has always shown itself full of energy, both in its beginning and in its repeated

revivals; for it seems to spring up again and again with renewed strength from every soil in which it has once taken root; and at every such revival, it has, for a time, given a great stimulus to the moral life of man. But, whenever simple religious feeling has ceased to be self-sufficient, it has not been able to endure the contact of other influences, whether political or scientific, literary or artistic; and it has signally failed to penetrate them with its spirit, and absorb them as elements into its own life.

If this general contrast hold good, we need not wonder that two such opposed types of religion and of civilisation should show themselves to be mutually repellent. They must repel each other, because each of them in its own way aims at universality, though their methods of attaining it are very different. The Hellenic type of religion naturally proceeds by the method of all-inclusive *tolerance*. Polytheism can easily find room for a new god in its Pantheon; and pantheism can as easily remerge another individuality in its all-embracing, all-absorbing substance. Such a religion also readily finds room within its spacious bosom for all varieties of finite life, for all species of human interests. Art is welcome to it, as the revelation of the one in the many; Science and Philosophy as the reduction of the many to the one. On the other hand, the Hebraic type of religion as naturally proceeds, we might almost say,

by the method of *intolerance*. The God of monotheism is an exclusive Ego who admits no other God beside Himself; and its adherents have always refused to accept any position for their religion but that of absolute supremacy. The easy tolerance of Rome found in the Jews a nation which could not be absorbed except by being extinguished, and which, indeed, was not extinguished till, in a higher sense than even Greece, it had made spiritual conquest of its conquerors. Thus, in striving after universality, the two principles are necessarily forced into a war, which it is difficult to regard as other than internecine. Even in modern times when, as I have already said, they have become subdued into harmony, or at least into reciprocal toleration, by the long influence of the reconciling principle of Christianity, we find the antagonism bursting out afresh with a suddenness and explosive force which looks like the rebound of an ineradicable instinct of nature. How often, in our own day, do we thus see renewed the old quarrel of the saint, the religious man, the moral teacher, against the philosopher, the scientific man, the artist. The former finds the latter too worldly and indifferent, too willing to treat evil with toleration and to make compromises with it, too much inclined to regard the 'one thing needful' as only one of the various interests of mankind, and not as the supreme interest to which everything should be

sacrificed. The latter finds the former too narrow and intolerant, too anxious for instant moral gains, too eager to proselytise and convert, too careful for safety, and too careless about truth. Thus the two great classes of the servants of humanity get ranged into opposite camps, and the individual finds it hard to avoid being enlisted in one or other, except at the expense of being treated as a traitor by both. If this is so even in our own day, we need not wonder that in the past,—when there were few or none of those mediating or universalising influences which now modify the strife of opposing principles, and when each nation and society lived more exclusively under the dominance of its own idea,—Jew and Gentile should have misunderstood and offended each other, just because they were inspired by apparently contradictory, though really complementary, truths. Of no struggle that has divided human beings would it be more true to say, in the language of St. Paul, that it has been a conflict not of individuals against individuals, nor even of nations against nations, but of 'principalities and powers,'—of those great spiritual forces in humanity to which individuals and nations are but the organs and instruments.

We may help ourselves still more vividly to realise the reality and vitality of this great conflict, if we think of the objections which are commonly brought against any theories that approximate to one or other

of the two extremes. Thus the pantheism, in which objective religion terminates, is represented to us in its simplest and crudest form in Pope's *Essay on Man*, as a theory which gathers up all the various objects in the world to an absolute unity, justifies all the parts in view of the whole, and, from the same point of view, denies the reality of any standard of excellence by which any one part could claim a superiority over the rest.

> "All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
> Whose body nature is, and God the soul;
> That, changed through all and yet in all the same,
> Great in the earth as in the aethereal frame,
> Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
> Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;
> Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
> Spreads undivided, operates unspent,
> Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
> As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
> As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
> As the rapt seraph that adores and burns;
> To Him no high, no low, no great, no small,
> He fills, He bounds, connects and equals all."

From this point of view all difference, even the difference of good and evil, vanish away in a universal optimism, and the poet can declare

> "All discord, harmony not understood,
> All partial evil universal good;
> And, spite of pride, in erring nature's spite,
> One truth is clear, whatever is, is right."

The whole is good, because it *is* the whole, and, as

such, is eternally one with itself: and, indeed, nothing really exists but the whole; for the part, if it was seen truly, would be merged in the whole. Any standard, therefore, which would lift one thing above another, would be an abstract and partial standard. If things are referred to the whole, it justifies them all alike as parts; and it condemns them all alike, if they pretend to be more.

From this point of view the moral standard can as little be admitted as any other; for the same power that "heaves old ocean," and "wings the storm," must be conceived also to

> "Pour fierce ambition in a Caesar's mind,
> And turn young Ammon loose to scourge mankind."

The facile flow of Pope's verse, and the easy way in which he escapes from moral distinctions and from all other distinctions, by regarding them as the products of our limited and imperfect view of things, exposes in the most open way the weak side of this pantheistic optimism. But the objections to which it is liable are the same that are commonly brought against every form of pantheism, from that of Spinoza downwards. Thus it is objected to such pantheism, in the first place, that, if all distinctions of being are lost in the absolute unity, the very assertion that 'all is for the best,' that 'whatever is, is right,' loses all its meaning. A theory, in which all ground for the division of good and evil is swept away, might as rationally be called

a pessimism as an optimism. If, as being ourselves finite parts of a finite world, we have no right to *condemn* anything; if our condemnation merely shows the imperfection of our standard, how is it that we can rise to the idea of the whole, and in view of it *justify* everything? Again, it is objected that, if all standards of preference, and especially all moral standards, are to be rejected as illusions of finitude, this really means, not only that our whole moral consciousness, our consciousness of freedom and responsibility, has to be regarded as such an illusion, but also that the same thing must be said of our very consciousness of self. All differences disappear in the unity of substance; and the unity itself, the white light of truth, becomes unknowable, except through the rainbow illusion of finite existence to which it is opposed. For, if man himself is nothing but a part of the great whole—a wave of the ocean, that somehow for a moment seems to itself and to other finite beings to have a substantial reality of its own—how should this passing mode be able, not only to think itself as such a substance, but also to rise to an apprehension of the infinite and the eternal, and so to transcend and refute the illusion of its own existence? That a dream or a shadow should know itself is an impossibility; and still more—if there are grades in impossibility—that it should know itself to be a dream and a shadow, and that it should recognise the reality

from which it is divorced. The pantheism which begins by annulling the moral responsibility of the individual is, when logically carried out, equally fatal to the consciousness of self and of God, and thus to the possibility of pantheism itself. It is, however, the former objection rather than the latter, which we most often hear; for the practical moral consciousness—apart from all metaphysical reflexion and in spite of it—cries out against any theory that would treat its standards and distinctions as illusive projections of the finite intelligence. Rather, it asserts them to be the surest of all truths, bound up with our inmost life and being, and based upon an inner experience which is more evident and self-evidencing to us than any other consciousness can ever be.

On the other hand, if we take monotheism in an equally hard and abstract form, as expressed in the conception of an all-wise Creator and Governor of the world, who stands apart from it and from us, as we finite individuals stand apart from each other, who has laid down for us an absolute law of right, and gifted us with freedom to obey or to disobey it, and who rewards and punishes us according as we do the one or the other, this, no doubt, is a religion which, up to a certain point, satisfies the moral consciousness and maintains the justice of God and the responsibility of man. But it does so at the cost of breaking so completely with all the facts

of experience, that its greatest modern supporter was forced to maintain that the outward and phenomenal view of man, and the inward or noumenal view of him, are essentially irreconcilable. Such a religion isolates the individual man from the world and from other men, in order to gift him with an absolute and unlimited responsibility for all that he is and does. Thus it is inconsistent with the admission of any inborn tendency in him either to evil or to good; or it can be made consistent therewith only by the transcendental hypothesis of a prenatal act of freedom, which determines our earthly condition. And it practically denies the social nature of man, and reduces society to the external intercourse of beings, each of whom is 'master of himself and his fate,' in a sense which excludes any real spiritual influence of one upon another either for good or for evil. Nay, in its effort to vindicate God from the charge of being the cause of evil and sin, it tends in another way to come into collision with the elementary sentiment of all religion, the feeling of dependence upon God; while, at the same time, it destroys that earliest form of religious morality, in which the sense of intimate community between men was based on their common relation to the divine. It offends science by the assertion of a kind of freedom in individuals which seems to be the negation of all laws of causation; and it offends philosophy,

by the denial that there is any point of view from which the differences of things can be brought back to a rational unity. For it seems to involve not only that the distinction of good and evil is real, but that there is an absolute evil which never can be made the means to a greater good. In short, to sum up all in a word, the logical development of this religious view would place each individual in such an isolation of personality as to make impossible the unity of the whole system of things, and, more especially, the real spiritual relation of men to each other and to God.

It is easy to see that in all this we are face to face with no mere contest about words, but with an antagonism of spiritual interests, both of which are equally vital to humanity; with a conflict of opposite phases of the truth, which it seems impossible to reconcile, while yet it is equally impossible to sacrifice one of them to the other. If, as Hegel said, a true tragedy must be based, not on the conflict of right with wrong but on the conflict of right with right, it may fairly be asserted that this is the deepest of all those oppositions of truth to truth which give rise to the great tragic conflicts of history. In such a struggle no complete victory is possible; because there is no possible victory of idea over idea, except by their common absorption in one which is higher and more comprehensive than

either. Here, indeed, the contrast is so deep and far-reaching that the opposite forms of thought are continually finding new organs of expression for themselves; and the conflict that seemed to be ended in one generation breaks out afresh in the next. For Christian nations, indeed, it may perhaps be said that the reconciling principle is already present, keeping the conflict within bounds, and always in the long run bringing it to an issue in a definite direction; but that principle is so hard to grasp and express in a conclusive form, and so difficult to follow out into a new application, that the old struggle always begins again in a new form. Indeed, it may almost be said to be a struggle which, in one form or another, is essential to human development, and which, therefore, must continue as long as that development itself.

LECTURE SECOND.

THE IDEA OF THE RELATION OF GOODNESS TO HAPPINESS, AND ITS DEVELOPMENT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The Moral Influence of Jewish Monotheism as contrasted with that of other Religions—Old Testament View of Man's Relation to God —Similar Vein of Thought in Pascal—Why this Religion is a Religion of Prophecy—The Idea of a Present Division between Goodness and Happiness, and a Future Reconciliation—Gradual Increase of the Difficulty owing to Higher Ideas both of Goodness and Happiness—Corresponding Changes in the Idea of their Reconciliation—The Rise of Messianic Hopes—The Resurrection of the Just.

In the previous lecture I have contrasted the two forms of objective and subjective religion, as having respectively a predominantly contemplative or a predominantly practical tendency. I have spoken of the former as leading to the restful, contemplative worship of a God, who is realised and manifested in the actual movement of nature and of human life; while the latter sets man in antagonism with nature, with fortune, and with himself—makes him

measure his own life and the life of the society to which he belongs by an ideal standard, and condemn both as inadequate to his desires and his aspirations. The former is, therefore, a religion which reconciles the individual to his world, his natural and ethical environment, or, at the worst, in its most abstract pantheistic form,—inspires him with resignation and submission to it as an inevitable fate; while the latter is a religion that proclaims 'woe' to those that are 'at ease in Zion,' stings man into activity by the contrast between that which *is* and that which *ought to be*, and fills him with an inextinguishable longing and aspiration after a perfection which he finds nowhere realised on earth. This must not, indeed, be understood to mean that religions of the objective type are altogether without ethical influence. On the contrary, even in a very primitive form of such religion, the gods are regarded as the forefathers of the race of their worshippers; and their worship is therefore bound up with the natural piety which unites the individual to his kinsmen. So also in Greece and Rome civic patriotism was consecrated by a religion which combined the worship of the gods with the service of the State. And it may fairly be said that, throughout all the ancient world, the principle of nationality and the worship of a national god were essentially bound up together. Even the Indian

pantheism turned religion into a support of social morality, in so far as it consecrated the order of the caste system, and inculcated resignation to its inequalities, by tracing them back to a divine principle which was beyond this and all other differences. But in all these cases the ethical spirit of objective religion had one defect. The moral division of man's life had not yet become distinctly conscious of itself, and therefore it could not be healed in other than an imperfect and unspiritual manner. The natural and the moral, the real and the ideal, that which is and that which ought to be, were not yet distinguished; or, at least, the depth and meaning of the distinction was not yet fathomed; and therefore a complete and adequate reconciliation of them could not be achieved. For, until the extent of a difference is measured, until the source and origin of an opposition is discerned, every combination of the conflicting elements must be merely a compromise. It is only when the antagonism has been fully worked out and sharpened to its utmost intensity, that we can look through and beyond it, and discern whether after all there is not a principle of unity, which is presupposed in the division, and therefore is capable of overcoming it. Now, the ethics of objective religion has never sufficiently broken away from its physical starting point; the social obligations which it acknowledges are still based on natural distinc-

tions and relations, and the virtues which it cultivates are still the development of special natural gifts. As poetry reveals spiritual truth under a sensuous form which is inadequate to it, so, for objective religion, the spiritual origin of the social relations of man is still hidden under the disguise of natural ties of blood. And if, even as so hidden, it could elevate and idealise the natural bonds of union, yet it could neither break away from them altogether, nor avoid paying a certain penalty for their imperfection. But it is just here that subjective religion shows its superiority. In rending away the conscious self from all mere objects, it imposes its own form upon the Absolute, *i.e.* upon the unity which is presupposed in the consciousness of the self as truly as in the consciousness of objects, and from which therefore the self cannot be separated. In this way, the idea of the spirituality of God and the idea of His absolute moral demands upon man, spring up together. Man is lifted out of the rank of other objects by his consciousness of himself as a subject; and, by the same movement of reflexion, he is brought into relation with an absolutely holy will, and made aware of an ideal law which, as a spiritual being, he is bound to fulfil, but which, because he is also a natural being, he is far from fulfilling. Thus the exalting sense of dignity, the consciousness that he is "made but

a little lower than God,"[1] and that "all things are put under his feet," passes immediately into the humbling feeling of weakness and finitude. "What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him?" His consciousness of being made in the image of God at once lifts him up and casts him down; lifts him up with the idea of his nearness to the divine, and of a "glory and honour" in which no other creature partakes, but casts him down with the sense of his finitude. The *closeness* of the relation, and at the same time the *disproportion* of the relation, between God and man, oppress the soul with an awe from which it cannot liberate itself. How, as Job asks, shall a man plead his right with God "as a man with his neighbour"? The consciousness of an infinite Being, the source of all that calls itself wisdom and goodness, whenever it is fully realised, makes the soul that has entertained it shrink into itself with horror. "I had heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."[2] This recoil of the mind against the idea of questioning God may take various forms. It may present itself simply as the

[1] Psalm viii. 5. The above is the correct translation. The word is 'Elohim.'

[2] Job xlii. 6.

absurdity of finitude turning upon the infinite Being, and challenging His will, as if it could detach itself from Him or find an independent standing ground of its own. "Shall the clay say to him who fashioneth it: What makest thou? or thy work: He hath no hands"?[1] In a higher mood it appears as a consciousness of the impossibility of separating the thought of righteousness from the source of all right, and of uniting it with the frailty of man. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?"[2] "What is man that he should be clean, or he that is born of a woman that he should be righteous? Behold he putteth no trust in His holy ones, yea, the heavens are not clean in His sight."[3] But even this prostration has in it a principle that elevates man far above the level of that finitude in which he is confused with all the other creatures; for the consciousness of finitude cannot exist in one who is altogether finite.

Among modern writers Pascal has most vividly expressed, and at the same time analysed, this fundamentally Jewish conception of the *grandeur et misère de l'homme*,—his wretchedness, because he is conscious of the *infinite* in contrast with his own finitude; and his greatness, because he is *conscious* of it. Beginning with the external infinitude of space and power, Pascal says: "Space comprehends and swallows me up like a

[1] Isa. xlv. 9. [2] Gen. xviii. 25. [3] Job xv. 14.

point; but by thought I comprehend it." "Man is but a reed, the weakest thing in nature; but he is a thinking reed. It is not needful that the universe should arm itself to crush him. A breath of vapour, a drop of water, is enough to kill him. But even if the universe were to crush him, man would be more noble than that which slays him, because he knows that he dies." Again the same consciousness of limit, as against the unlimited, turns into the demand for satisfaction which man makes against the world, and which the world cannot answer. "Why does man weary of everything, and seek to delude himself by a multitude of occupations? Is it not because he has the idea of a happiness which he has lost, and which, finding it not in himself, he seeks vainly in external things, without ever being able to content himself; for it is to be found neither within nor without us, but in God alone?" Yet "he who finds it miserable not to be a king must be a king dethroned," and the very consciousness of misery from which man cannot escape is the seal of his greatness. "It is dangerous to let man see too clearly how he is on a level with the animals, without showing him his greatness. It is dangerous to let him see too clearly his greatness, without his meanness. If he boasts himself, I abase him; if he abases himself, I exalt him. I contradict him continually, till he comprehends what an incomprehensible monster he is.'

Pacsal proceeds to explain the inconsistencies of such a nature by the idea of the fall of man from an original state, in which he was in harmony with God and with himself. "If man had never been corrupted, in his innocence he would confidently enjoy truth and felicity. If he had never been anything but corrupt, he would have no idea of truth or happiness. But, wretched that we are, we have an idea of happiness and cannot attain it: we perceive an image of truth, and we possess a lie. Alike incapable of absolute ignorance and of certain knowledge, the one thing that we know is, that we were once in a grade of perfection from which we have miserably fallen."

In these words we have a reflective reproduction of the same attitude of mind which characterises the religion of the Old Testament—a religion in which man is elevated above all other things, and even above his own natural self, by being brought near to God; but in which this elevation at once turns into such an overpowering awe, and such a trembling sense of weakness and unworthiness, that any thought of pride or self-confidence is entirely excluded. It is this that gives its higher moral meaning to such expressions as those of Isaiah: "Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire?"[1] *i.e.* in the immediate presence of an absolute righteousness. For the answer: "He that walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly," shows

[1] Isa. xxxiii. 14.

that Isaiah is not speaking of a mere worship of terror, but of the awe of infinite perfection. The intense searching of heart produced by conscious nearness to the divine light has never been expressed with such startling force as in some of the Psalms and in passages of the prophetic books. It is this which puts a wide gulf between them and the religious books of all other nations, in which the division of man's nature,—the opposition between his consciousness of himself in his immediate individuality and his consciousness of God as the universal power and principle of his life,—is yet latent or imperfectly expressed; and in which, therefore, neither the sense of sin nor the thirst for a higher than earthly satisfaction could possibly take such definite form.

One great consequence of this is that Judaism is a religion of *prophecy*, a religion which, unlike the religions of classical antiquity, lives not in the present but in the future. For, as we have seen, it is a religion which puts man at war with his circumstances and with himself in the *present;* but which views the defects of the present in relation to a *past* good which he has lost, and to a *future* good which he seeks to regain. Wherever we open his pages, we find the Hebrew prophet or psalmist looking *back*, out of the evil and suffering of his own time, to an original blessedness, an incorrupt state of human nature which has become depraved, a covenant with

God which has been broken: and we find him looking *forward* to a better future in which the broken unity of man with God and with himself shall be restored. He is waiting for a happiness that is to come, and which he supposes his people to have enjoyed in the past; and his explanation of the absence of such happiness from the present is always the moral failure of his own generation. The covenant made with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has been forgotten, and therefore the promise which was attached to it cannot be immediately fulfilled. But, through all, there is a faithful remnant, who cling to the divine law and its Author and bear in their breast the promise of the better and happier time to come.

Into this '*Cadre*' of an *original* unity, a *present* division, and an *ultimate* reconciliation and restoration, —the great writers of Israel introduce all the facts of life; and by means of it they supply for these facts a moral interpretation. Hence, as I have said, their religion is a religion of *prophecy*, in which reference to the future takes the place which, in religions of what I have called the objective type, is taken by reference to the present. Subjective religion, as it arises out of an opposition between the self and the not-self, between the inward ideal of the heart and the immediate facts of the outward life, worships a God who is defined in terms of this subjective ideal. Hence it must believe that the antagonism between

the ideal and the immediate or apparent reality is only superficial and temporary; and it must look forward to a final reconciliation, in which the ideal will be shown to be real and right to be might. Indeed, the history of Jewish religion may be said to be just the history of the development of this view of man's life from its simplest to its most complex form.

At first, the contrast or discord between the ideal and the real is confined within very narrow limits; and all that is felt is, that, if we regard the outward fortunes of men as a distribution of rewards and punishments for goodness and wickedness, the awards do not seem to be such as to satisfy our sense of justice. The just is not prosperous nor the wicked punished. Even this difficulty is at first mitigated by two things: by the idea that goodness is not assured till it is tried by temptation, and by the idea that it is the race rather than the individual that is the subject of reward and punishment. In early times the solidarity of the kinship is such that it does not occur to the individual to regard as unjust a suffering which he endures in behalf of, or along with, his people. And, though the spirit of monotheistic religion tends more and more to sever the individual from his race and to throw him back upon himself, it is only at a comparatively late period, and when the Jewish nationality is verging to its fall,

that the individualistic principle is distinctly expressed. It is only then declared that the proverb: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" shall no more be heard in Israel; but "the soul that sinneth, *it* shall die."[1]

When, however, this gospel of individual responsibility was once promulgated—and we have seen that it was from the first involved in subjective religion—the problem of human life became much harder to solve; for, if it be difficult to see the execution of a divine justice in the history of nations, how is it possible to discern it at all in the fortunes of individuals? The doctrine that the suffering of the righteous and the success of the wicked are temporary, may help for a little to avert the pressure of this difficulty. "I have seen the wicked great in power, spreading himself like a green bay tree: yet he passed away, and lo! he was not, and when I sought him, he could not be found. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the latter end of that man is peace."[2] But how could such a belief hold out against the calamities of the later period of the history of Judah, which seemed to fall most heavily just upon those who, like the prophet Jeremiah, were most faithful to the task laid upon them, and which struck down the pious king Josiah in battle, while it allowed the impious Manasseh to enjoy a long reign? Ulti-

[1] Jer. xxxi. 30; Ezek. xviii. 2. [2] Psalms xxxvii. 36.

mately, the sober worldly wisdom, which was never wanting to the Jews, came to discern that "there be just men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked, and again there be wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous";[1] and that the oppressions of the rich and powerful, and the sufferings of the poor and weak, did not frequently end in any retributive reversal of their lot upon earth. The book of Ecclesiastes—which, however, is now supposed to be of very late date[2]—shows that there were men among the Jewish nation, who, in this sense, sounded the depth of pessimism. "So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and beheld the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter. Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive. Yea, better is he than both they, which hath not seen the evil that is done under the sun."[3] The magnificent poetry of Job has no light to throw on the problem, except that God is great, and his ways are past understanding; and Ecclesiastes, if it ends in any moral lesson, seems only to bid us enjoy peacefully, with a

[1] Eccles. viii. 14.

[2] In the next lecture, it will be shown that the pessimistic strain of thought, which is here expressed, was characteristic of the latest period of Jewish religion.

[3] Eccles. iv. 1.

kind of pious Epicureanism, what goods fall to our lot.

But such hopeless submission was never the general temper of the Hebrew race. Rather, it was their characteristic that the defeat of immediate hopes only produced in them a deepening and widening of their original faith in the ultimate unity of might and right. The highest strains of Jewish prophecy, the tenderest utterances of Jewish piety, were just those occasioned by the defeating and protracting of an unquenchable hope. On the one hand pain and suffering, regarded in the light of a conviction that calamity is always the result of sin, led to a deeper view of the *kind* of righteousness demanded by a heart-searching God, who could never be satisfied with a mere outward obedience. The reason of outward affliction was thus found in the lurking impurity of a heart which was not yet really at one with the divine law. Nay, the suffering itself began to be regarded as a blessing in disguise, in so far as it contributed to purge and purify the soul. On the other hand, the process which led through trial to, happiness was lengthened out beyond the present life of the individual, and the idea of a future state, or at least of a 'resurrection of the just' at the Messianic restitution of all things, came to redress the balance. Nay, we may even say, that it came to be expected as a general rule that the life of the saints, in this present evil time, should be a

life of humility and suffering, consoled and supported by a glorious hope. And the bliss which was hoped for became so much idealised and spiritualised in their thought of it, that it ceased, at least to the nobler minds, to present itself as a mere fulness of earthly blessing; and it came to be represented as the happiness of goodness itself,—not the conquest of all nations by Israel, but that "through the seed of Israel all nations should be blessed." Thus the somewhat crude faith in a divine distribution of rewards and punishments to the servants and enemies of a national God, gradually deepens into a belief that in all the calamities of life the divine Spirit is with "those that are of a humble and contrite heart," and that they who sow in tears of life-long sacrifice for the good of others, will *somewhere, somewhen*, reap the unselfish joy of seeing all others redeemed from evil and unhappiness by their means.[1] This highest result of Jewish religion is expressed most fully in those wonderful prophecies of the later Isaiah, in which the narrow and legal view of a righteousness that looks for earthly happiness as its immediate reward, gives way to the pathetic image of a servant of God, who neither 'strives' with others for his own interest nor 'cries' out against the wrongs that are done

[1] *In Memoriam*, 54—

"I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring."

him, but "bears the griefs and carries the sorrows" of others and, through his self-surrender, conquers the power of evil and lays the foundation for a better future to all. In this way that trust in the faithfulness of God, which was characteristic of the Jewish nation, rises, as it were, out of the grave of the earthly kingdom of David in the form of a Messianic hope, which, at least in its higher and more spiritual aspect, was only a slightly disguised expression of that faith in the ultimate triumph of goodness, which is bound up with the very existence of morality.

The changes through which the faith of the Old Testament thus passes are not accidental, not due merely to the historical course of things in a particular nation. Rather, they are the necessary stages through which the moral consciousness of man, and the religion which goes along with that consciousness, are developed and purified from the baser and coarser ingredients which at first mingle with them. The idea that punishment will follow crime, that happiness will follow goodness, is not to be repudiated as if it were merely the indication of a slavish spirit that needs to be bribed to virtue, and that will not make any sacrifice, without asking: 'What shall we have then?' It is, in its simplest and most naïve form, the consciousness that 'right is might,' that 'morality is the nature of things,' that the law of the world corresponds to the highest

law of our own being. "*Fiat justitia, ruat caelum,*" is a good rhetorical contrast; but that cannot be justice by which the world is destroyed. The righteous man's act, in clinging to his righteousness against the utmost menace of fortune and of evil men, would have no meaning, if he were not appealing to a deeper power in nature and in the hearts of those men themselves. The Carlylean faith, that 'the cause we fight for so far as it is true, is sure of victory,' is the necessary basis of all effective activity for good. At the same time, the first simple form in which that faith appears is at variance with obvious facts of life; and it mingles, almost undistinguishably, the higher motives of action with the selfish greed and ambition of the individual. A religion that speaks in such tones as these: "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it"[1]—such a religion contains, indeed, that synthesis of outward and inward which is necessary to all religion; but it expresses it in a simple and immediate way, which is excusable only because it is addressed to children or to men who are in a childish stage of culture. Every step in the advance of man's moral experience, and in his reflexion upon that experience, is a step towards a deeper understanding of the two terms which are

[1] Isaiah i. 19.

thus united, and at the same time towards a clearer comprehension of what is meant by their union. Goodness has the promise of happiness: godliness is "profitable for all things, having the promise of this life and of that which is to come." *Yes:* but what *is* goodness, and what *is* godliness? Not the immediate compliance with an outward command regarded as divine, but the conformity of the whole heart and character to the spirit of the law; not only walking uprightly, but "clean hands and a pure heart"; not merely the outward service which does the day's labour looking for the day's wages, but, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself." So soon as this deeper consciousness of that which is necessary to bring man into conformity with the divine ideal arises, the process lengthens; for it is seen that the soul has to contend against an evil which clings to it as part of its very being, yet from which it is its first concern to be delivered. The very thought of reward vanishes from him who is conscious that he needs a thorough spiritual change, ere there can be in him anything to reward; and who is far too much oppressed by a sense of the inward division of his nature to be thinking of any extraneous good beyond the bliss of being reconciled to God and to himself. When the clinging sense of evil is expressed in such words as these: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity;

and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold Thou desirest truth in the inward parts"; all other wishes must be postponed to the desire for inward purity. "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me."[1] To one who has reached such an intensive consciousness of the infinity of duty, and of the need of an inward transformation of his own nature, the simple ideal of an earlier time,—the picture of a righteous man enjoying the favour of God and man as the natural and necessary reward of his righteousness, of a patriarch living under his own vine and his own fig-tree, with an untroubled conscience and a happy and numerous family around him,—has ceased to present supreme attraction. Such a picture must seem to him like a childish dream, or, at best, like the legend of a remote past, in which the men of an earlier race lived other and more simple lives than is possible for himself. If he thinks of it in relation to himself, such conscious righteousness as is expressed in some of the Psalms must seem to him deceptive and insecure: *deceptive*, because such self-confidence can only be possible to one who has not yet detected the secret sources of evil in his own heart; and *insecure*, because the reward supposed to be attained has come too soon, without the trial and the suffering that could alone prepare for its enjoyment. Nay, even the reward itself must

[1] Psalms li. 5, 10.

seem something too limited, too selfish, and too external to be regarded as a final object of desire. The deepening of the religious and moral consciousness thus leads to a conception of life as a discipline, which can hardly be too long and severe to subdue and humble the natural man, and to prepare him to be a vessel of divine grace; and, instead of the proud challenge of the righteous man confident in his own righteousness: "Let me be weighed in a balance so that God may know mine integrity"; we have the humility which is born of the consciousness of an infinite ideal: "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord; for in Thy sight no man living can be justified."[1] The religious type, if we might use the expression, the pattern of moral excellence and saintliness which is, at this stage, regarded as the highest for man, is that of the 'Ebyon,' who combines outward poverty and suffering with inward humility and self-surrender, and, like Jeremiah, through all persecution and calamity, 'waits patiently for the consolation of Israel.' Sometimes this repressed and humbled religious spirit even rises above the need of any consolation, and finds in its own inward experiences of divine communion, a joy that is sufficient for itself, without the need of any outward evidence to support it. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon

[1] Psalms cxliii. 2.

earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."[1]

Now it is obvious that, as any approach is made to this deeper view of the nature and conditions of spiritual excellence, the idea of the happiness which is to be the reward of such goodness must also be changed. Two influences may be noticed which partly conflict, partly co-operate, but both of which contribute to alter the religious conception of the blessedness which is to be realised in the future. On the one hand, the postponement of such blessedness beyond the immediate life of the individual takes away the empirical limit within which it had to be confined, when it was supposed to be realised under the ordinary conditions of human existence; and also deprives it of the definite, sensuous character which was necessarily attributed to it as a bliss to be enjoyed here, and now. And, on the other hand, the deepening reflexion which the advance of time brings with it, cannot but change the idea of what constitutes a satisfying good for man. Man has become conscious of a void in himself which cannot be filled by a limited earthly happiness; and, released from the measure of what is practicable under present conditions, the imagination can paint the glories of the better future in whatever colours it pleases. This,

[1] Psalms lxxiii. 25.

indeed, would of itself only lead—in those who were unable to rise to a spiritual view of things—to an extravagant hope of the triumph of Israel over all her enemies, and of the re-establishment of the kingdom of David on a grander scale as a sovereignty over the whole earth. But the same movement of thought which emancipated the imagination, and so gave rise to apocalyptic visions of the Messianic kingdom, had also, as we have seen, produced in many of the better spirits a deepened moral consciousness, which could no longer find satisfaction in the realisation of any outward ambition on however enlarged a scale. To him for whom the deepest source of joy was the life that is hid with God, and who regarded that life as finding its natural expression in the service of men, and especially in the consolation and support of the poor and the oppressed, a conquering Messiah who should set the feet of the Jews on the necks of their enemies, could no longer be the realisation of his dearest hopes. Rather, he must look upon that as the only true victory of the good cause, in which it shall win to itself the hearts of its enemies; that in which the tide of life which he feels within himself shall flow forth to overcome all the resistant powers of evil. To such a spirit in the later Isaiah the divine voice already spoke, in words which anticipate the universalism of St. Paul, breaking down the limits of all national religion "It is too light a thing that thou shouldest

be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the preserved of Israel. I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth."[1] And the character of the salvation itself necessarily changes with the universalising of it, ceasing to consist solely, or mainly, in any reward of goodness which can be separated from goodness itself. In place of the old covenant in which an outward reward was attached to an outward service, Jeremiah tells us that Jehovah is about to substitute a new covenant, which, unlike the former, will never be broken, because it abolishes the division between man and the God with whom he covenants. "This shall be the new covenant which I shall make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them."[2]

This slight sketch of the way in which the ideas of goodness and of its reward are gradually deepened and elevated in the later prophets and psalmists, is enough to show that we have here one of the most remarkable cases of what we may call the *dialectic*

[1] Isaiah xlix. 6. [2] Jer. xxxi. 33.

of the development of religious ideas. The fundamental principle of all subjective religion is faith in divine justice, a faith that that justice is ever executing, and will more and more fully execute, itself upon earth. Such a faith sets the inner consciousness of what ought to be against what is, or, at least, what appears to be in the present; and it prophesies a future in which the demands of the inner voice will be outwardly realised. It may at first be mixed with selfish anticipations, and so may give rise to an outward goodness which does not 'serve God for nought.' But to a truly religious mind, even in the very simplest stage, the belief in the outward success which is to follow upon rectitude is nourished, not merely by the selfish desire of reward, but also, and far more, by the need of seeing the inward voice of conscience confirmed and manifested as the law of the universe. This is the permanent element of belief which survives through all the changing forms of Jewish religion, and which through all these forms is gradually purifying and enlarging itself, till finally it becomes the faith in a providential law according to which the 'history of the world' is still the 'judgment of the world,' but in no such simple and arbitrary fashion as that obedience immediately has its reward provided by a divine interposition. On the contrary, experience and reflexion have gradually made it manifest that it is only through suffering

and sacrifice that the goodness of man gains that overcoming power which nothing can resist; and also that the success which it then wins lies not in the outward happiness of the sufferer himself, but rather in the higher life which he thus earns for his nation and for humanity. In this sense, the servant of God suffers for the sins, and with a view to the salvation of others. "The chastisement of their peace is laid upon him, and with his stripes they are healed." Hence the triumph of goodness which satisfies the moral consciousness is not of the good man himself, but only of his cause, or of him only as he is one with his cause. "The cause thou fightest for, so far as it is true, just so far and no farther, is sure of victory." Or, if the prophet can still hold that the sufferer for humanity will see of the travail of his soul, and will be satisfied, that idea can find its legitimate development only in a belief in the resurrection of the just, such as gradually gained ground in the later period of the history of Israel. The last voice of Jewish prophecy is, therefore, not: 'Obey God and you will be happy,' but, rather, in words like the following, which express how the spirit rises from its own calamity to the contemplation of the purpose of God through the ages. When the Psalmist, looking at the sorrows and evils of his time, asks the question, "Is His mercy clean gone for ever, and will He be favourable no more?" he immediately finds for himself

the answer; "*This* is my infirmity"—this failing of faith—"but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High."[1] Out of such a view the hope of a better future arises, not under the form of an anticipation of external reward, but as the natural faith of spiritual life in its own permanence, in the eternal spring of existence which it contains within it. For, unlike the natural, the spiritual life has a fountain of new life in itself, which cannot be exhausted. "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."[2] And the final vision of happiness is one in which no baser ingredient of selfish triumph remains. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."[3]

[1] Psalms lxxvii. 8, 10. [2] Isa. xl. 30.
[3] Daniel xii. 3.

LECTURE THIRD.

THE RELATION OF JUDAISM TO CHRISTIANITY.

Jewish Conception of the Relation of the Moral Ideal to the Objective World, in Contrast with the Buddhist and the Christian Conceptions—That in Buddhism Spirit absolutely excludes, and in Judaism dominates Nature—But in Christianity Spirit is the Highest Manifestation of the same Principle revealed in Nature—Union of Monotheistic and Pantheistic Ideas in Christianity—Difficulties arising from this Synthesis—Solution of them by means of the Ideas of Organic Unity and Evolution—The Moral Ideal as Prophetic—How Judaism passes into Christianity.

In the last lecture I spoke of the Jewish religion as a religion of subjectivity. It is a religion which recoils upon an inward ideal, as opposed to the immediate aspect of the external world and the immediate phenomena of human life; but which, at the same time, rises to the belief in a God who will ultimately bring the course of things into harmony with that ideal. And I showed how the crude synthesis of goodness and happiness, which was the first expression of this religious idea, was gradually purified

and expanded by a higher view of both its terms, and also of what is meant by their connexion. Thus the development of goodness was seen to involve an inward struggle with the natural self, and an outward discipline of suffering and sacrifice; and, as this process lengthened, it put to a greater distance the fruition of joy to be earned from the harmony of the soul with itself and God. The consummation, therefore, could not be reached by the individual who had to suffer, but was only to be won by him for future generations of men. Or, if it was to be enjoyed by the individual at all, it could only be in another life beyond this. Or, finally, if it was to be attained by him in this life, it only was in a sense which made it independent of all outward success, as a joy and peace in God which could be felt even in the midst of the utmost outward calamity, the joy and peace of a life that had in itself the consciousness of its own permanence, its own eternal completeness.

Now, we have already seen that such a subjective religious attitude is the expression of a higher principle than that which is involved in what we have called objective religion. The mind, as it turns back upon itself, discovers within it a principle of unity which is presupposed in all objective experience, but which, at the same time, reaches beyond such experience. In its recoil upon its own inner life, it rises to

an ideal law and an ideal end, which in the outer life are very imperfectly realised. And not only does it thus originate new principles for the guidance of its own activity, but it learns to regard those principles as a more perfect manifestation of the ultimate law of the universe, and of the nature of its divine source, than can be found in the immediate facts of outward experience. Hence it cannot but believe that the law which it feels obliged to obey, and the end after which it feels bound to strive, have an objective as well as a subjective validity. In this point of view, the ideal which the mind sets up for itself is no mere arbitrary fancy, no mere wish that things might be other than they really are. The wants of the subject are, or may be, the expression of something deeper, and even, in a sense, more real than the facts to which they seem to be opposed. For, just in so far as man's beliefs and hopes spring purely out of his moral ideal, and contain nothing but the conception of that ideal as realised and of the conditions necessary to its realisation, they may fairly claim for themselves an authority which is higher than that of experience, and cannot, therefore, be refuted by it. They are what Kant calls 'postulates of practical reason,' beliefs and hopes that are bound up with our existence as rational beings, and which, therefore, we cannot disown except by being untrue to ourselves.

In saying so much, however, we must guard against a possible misunderstanding. The attitude of mind which is characteristic of Judaism is not that which regards the future good as the necessary development of the good which is already working in the present. Rather, the Jewish prophet is inclined absolutely and directly to oppose the ideal good he prophesies, to the actual state of things which he sees around him; and to look forward to the change which he is sure must come, as one that is to be brought about by the direct agency of the divine power miraculously interfering in the world. He feels God within, and he believes that one day He will reveal Himself without. He appeals from the judgment of his contemporaries to a divine judgment, which he is sure will be the same with the judgment of his own heart and conscience. He expects, therefore, that God will, in time, bring about the salvation of His people, not by the evolution of principles already at work in the world, but by an immediate intervention from above, which shall destroy the evils that oppress them and establish a reign of righteousness upon earth.

In order to illustrate this difference, which is closely related to the difference between Judaism and Christianity, I shall put the matter in another form. When we say that subjective religion is

higher than objective religion, or that it gives men a truer and more comprehensive view of their relations to the world and to God, we are using terms that are somewhat ambiguous; for the words, 'truer,' 'higher,' 'more comprehensive,' are indefinite expressions, which may be understood in different ways. There are, indeed, no less than *three* possible interpretations of them, all of which have been exemplified in the history of religion. The Indian pantheism ends in setting the subjective above the objective, but so in their way do also Judaism and Christianity; and it may help to make our subject clearer, if we consider what were the respective characteristics of these three ways of appealing from the outward to the inward.

In the first place, then, the assertion of the superiority of the subjective may be and has been taken to mean that the inner life is the *exclusive* sphere of religion, or, in the language of Iphigenia, that it is "*only* through our hearts that God speaks to us." On this view the natural world is undivine, unspiritual, external, a body of death which conceals rather than reveals the infinite. Everything outward is shadowy, evanescent, illusive—such 'stuff as dreams are made of'; and truth is to be found only in abstracting from it, in severing the ties that bind us to it, in escaping from its deceptions into the silence of the inner life of thought. In

this extreme we find subjective religion represented by the *Upanishads*, with their assertion of the illusiveness of all objective existence and their identification of the self with the absolute. But the religion of subjectivity no sooner emerges in this form, than, as we have seen,[1] it begins to turn its arms against itself. For the subject that thus seeks to free his soul from all that is not itself, to expel all objective interests as vain and illusive, is really seeking to rid itself of all contents or interests whatsoever. It soon comes to be seen that the inner life of ideas is a repetition of the vain show of the outward world; and, in order to escape from all illusion, the soul finds it needful to rid itself of the former as well as of the latter. If life, the inner as well as the outer life, is but a mad struggle for shadows, the only way to reality is the path of death. But in this view there is no truer life beyond death; hence there is no dying to live, but only a "shuffling off this mortal coil," a sleep of Nirvana so profound that no "dream can ever come" to disturb it.

The subjective religion of the Jews was not of this absolute type. It indeed exalts the subjective above the objective, the ideal of the soul above the facts of the outward life; but it does not sever them from each other. It subordinates the external

[1] Vol. I. p. 353 *seq.*

world, or demands that it should subordinate itself, to a law derived from within; but it does not, like Buddhism, treat the outward universe as an illusive semblance, an unreal and deceiving show. Starting with the conception that the whole system of finite things is the product of God's creative power, which He has called into existence with a word, and which with a word He can destroy, and which meantime rests as a passive instrument in His hands, the Jewish prophet regards it as idolatry to confuse the creature with the Creator, to think of God as immanent in the world, or to regard nature as able to contain God or to reveal Him. For him, therefore, the authentic voice of God is not in the storm-wind or the earthquake or the fire, though these are the highest natural expressions of Him. It is within, in the imperative of duty and the protest of the heart against the injustice of the world. However widely, therefore, he may separate between God and nature, however high he may raise Him above the life of man, yet he never thinks of imitating the quietism of the Indian devotee, who is content to withdraw into himself and to regard the outward scene as a dream and a shadow from which he is to be delivered simply by treating it as nought. On the contrary, he always thinks of the world and the outward history of man as the true sphere in which God is to show His power and His goodness; and

his demand always is, not that the outward world should vanish away, but that it should be harmonised with the will of God as that is known to the hearts of His servants. His hope and aspiration is not for Nirvana, nor yet for the peace of the grave, where the "wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest," but for the final victory of right over wrong, for the ultimate manifestation of God in a world brought into conformity with the divine law, which already manifests itself within us. The final relation, therefore, in which God is conceived as standing towards the world, is neither that the world is lost in God, nor that He is immanent in it, but that it, while still remaining separate, is externally subordinated to His wisdom and His justice. The manifestation of divine power may, indeed, be delayed for the trial of His people; but it is certain to come in the fulness of time, to the dismay of His enemies, and the joy of His saints, who have been 'waiting for the consolation of Israel.' "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him."[1] The Judaic faith, therefore, is that God externally overrules the course of nature and history, or, at least, that He certainly will one

[1] Psalm xxxvii. 5-7.

day overrule it, in order to bring it into harmony with the demands of the spirit. As, in the system of Kant, it is *postulated* that God will join happiness to goodness, although immediately they seem to have no natural or necessary connexion; so here it is *prophesied* that He will restore again by an external force the unity of the world without and the world within. Hence the realisation of the ideal is conceived not as present but future. The present is a time of division in which the original unity is lost, and the ultimate reconciliation can only be an object of faith and not of vision or fruition.

It is easy to see that neither of these conceptions of the relation of the inward to the outward, the subjective to the objective, is finally satisfactory. The Buddhist nihilism logically ends in the negation or extinction of that very subjective life which it begins by exalting. And if the religion of Israel saves itself from this extreme result of a onesidedness which refutes itself, if it still tries to bind inward and outward together by a divine necessity, yet this necessity is only that of a *deus ex machina*. Thus the Jewish tendency to insist on the spirituality of God as a Being revealed only in, and to, the spirits of men, makes it impossible to conceive His relation to the outward world as any other than one of external dominance. But this implies that the Divine Being is still thought of

as an abstract subject, and not, in the full sense of the word, as a spiritual principle who is above this and all other differences. For a being who is external to anything, or to whom anything is external, does not agree with the idea of God. In this sense we may admit Goethe's saying that the Jewish religion is "the highest of ethnic religions but still ethnic." For, as has been shown before, that which makes man a religious being, his primary need for a God, arises from the presence *in*, if not *to*, his consciousness of a unity which is beyond the division of subject and object; and, till he realises this primary element in his idea of God, the form and the matter of that idea must be at variance. Even the conception of God as an abstract subject, therefore, does not yet satisfy the fully developed religious sense. And the conception of such a subject as externally overruling the objective world can only imperfectly and temporarily supply this defect, in so far as an external combination can be a substitute for a living unity. But so soon as it is seen or felt that there is a vital connexion between the inward and the outward life, which cannot be broken without impoverishing both, so soon the idea of a God who 'gives the world a push from without or lets it spin round His finger,' becomes unsatisfactory; and religion if it would continue to exist, must rise

to a more comprehensive idea of God than that which is afforded even by ethical monotheism, and indeed must combine the monotheistic idea with that which it has often regarded as its greatest enemy, the spirit of pantheism.[1]

[1] It will be shown in a subsequent lecture that the later development of Jewish religion led to this result negatively by producing a dualistic view of the world, which scarcely falls short of the world-despair of the Buddhist. For the thought of a God who *externally* dominates over the course of nature and history is a compromise which cannot permanently be maintained. In the long run, a religion based on such a conception must advance to the idea of a spiritual principle which is immanent in the object as it is in the subject, or else it must carry the opposition of the subject to the object to the point at which the latter is contemplated as purely evil or negative. That which is outside of God is necessarily that which is opposed to Him, and that which is opposed to the divine must be evil, so far as it can be regarded as having any positive existence at all. We may illustrate this process of thought by the development of the Kantian philosophy, as it is shown, on the one side, in the pessimism of Schopenhauer, and, on the other side, in the optimism of Schelling and Hegel. The former is the necessary result, if Kant's first tendency to oppose reason to sense, and consequently the subject to the object, be insisted on, and carried out to its consequences. This opposition forces Kant himself to conceive the realisation of the moral ideal as a *progressus ad infinitum:* but even infinite time is not enough for the impossible task of uniting the moral with the natural, the sensuous desires with the law of reason. Hence it was open for Schopenhauer to argue that they could not be united at all. On the other hand, if we admit the postulate of Kant, that the moral ideal *must* be realised, and if we go on with him to recognise, as he recognises in the *Critique of Judgment* and the *Essay on the Idea of Universal History*, that in a sense it is realised

Now, it is at once obvious that a religion which should attempt this, which should seek to do justice at once to the unity, and to the opposition of spirit and nature, would have a much more difficult problem before it than was ever encountered either by subjective or by objective religion. Such a religion must see God at once without and within us, yet it must be able to discriminate the higher sense in which He is within and not without. It must see God in nature, without losing Him in nature's manifoldness; and in history, without making outward success the criterion of His favour. It must find a still higher revelation of Him in the protest of the conscience against the fact of successful injustice, and the demand of the heart for a more perfect state than has ever been empirically realised on earth; yet it must not set that which *ought to be* absolutely against that which *is*, or suppose that the judgment of God is a future judgment, which is not executing itself now and here.

Now, the distinctive character of Christianity arises from the fact that necessarily, by the circum-

already, or is progressively realising itself in nature and history, then we must advance beyond Kant in a different direction. We must reduce the opposition between sense and reason, or between consciousness and self-consciousness to a relative opposition, which exists in order that it may be transcended. In other words, we must adopt something like the evolutionary optimism of Hegel.

stances of its origin, it had to try to solve this problem. Jewish in its birthplace, Greek in its first written expression or interpretation, it had for its task to combine elements of the spiritual life of man which had never been combined before. It came in the fulness of time, in an age when the world was ready for a universal religion. The expanding thought of Greece had broken the national mould in which it had at first been cast, and had gradually prepared the world for cosmopolitanism. The empires of Alexander and of Rome had cast down the outward walls of division between all the nations which could be said to have a civilisation. Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian, were confused together in a common subjection, and assimilated by the gentle but steady and almost irresistible pressure of a universal law, which took no account of their racial, social, or religious differences. The Jews themselves, who alone stubbornly held to their native traditions, had their exclusiveness neutralised by the lessons of their greatest prophets; and in Alexandria they had even gone so far as to use Platonic philosophy for the interpretation of the Old Testament. In such an era of universalism it was impossible that religion should remain sectional, national, or exclusive. The prejudices of race and tradition, the religious and social antipathies of ages could not, indeed, be rooted out in a day, least

of all among a nation of such a stubborn tenacity as the Jews; but the spirit of the time was against them, and if, at last, made desperate by the growing sense of their powerlessness, the Jewish people rose in violent revolt against their oppressors, their fanatical outbreak could only be destructive to themselves. When the great tidal wave of human life and thought is setting strongly in one direction, it is only those spiritual forces that are working along with it and contributing to it, that can have real influence. "No individual by himself," says Goethe, "can effect anything considerable, but only he who unites with many, at the right time." A religion which is to take hold of the mind of man must supply its deepest want, and act along the lines of its deepest stream of tendency: and this, in the first century of the Christian era, undoubtedly meant that religion must free itself from every limitation, outward or inward, and speak directly to that in man which is most universal and ideal. It must take hold of the highest principle of unity in the human consciousness, and use it as a means of reconciling man to the world and to himself. Nor could it reach this result by the path of a vague pantheism, whose unity was simply the negation of all distinctions. Jewish prophecy had so deepened and intensified the moral consciousness, that it was no longer possible for men to be content with any

religion which did not maintain the spirituality of God and the responsibility of man. If it was henceforth impossible that any God should be worshipped who was not a God of the whole earth, any God who was *here* and not *there*, who was revealed to the prophets of a nation, and not to the universal consciousness of man, or even revealed in thought and not in perception and imagination, in the soul and not in outward nature; yet it was equally impossible that those who had known the tenderness and depth of a spiritual worship such as finds expression in the Psalms, should be content to confuse spirit with nature in the all-embracing, all-dissolving unity of pantheism. If, therefore, in such an epoch, universality and unity was the first condition of thought, and the necessary characteristic of any great religious movement, yet it must be secured, not by the sacrifice of that moral elevation which had been the result of the long religious development of Israel, but rather by a farther development, which should start from the highest point which Israel had reached. Nothing could meet the want of the time but a religion which should unite the immanence of pantheism with the transcendence of monotheism; a religion which should rise to a divine principle of all things, and yet be able to conceive that principle as a living God, the inspiring source and eternal realisation of the moral ideal of man.

Is such a demand reasonable? Does it not contradict itself? And can the religion that satisfies or tries to satisfy it, be anything more than a chaotic combination of inconsistent elements? This is a fundamental question of the philosophy of religion, a question the answer to which must determine not only the rationality of Christianity, but also the rationality of all religion. For it is at any rate obvious that only a religion which is able to satisfy these demands can now be anything to us. Moderns cannot accept any but a universal religion. They cannot believe in a God who is the God of this nation and not of that, or who is revealed in this object and not in that. They cannot believe in a Divine Power who is without and not within man, or within man and not without him. Hence there are many motives which drive us to break down the limits between different religious conceptions of the past and accept the facile toleration of Pope's universal prayer—

> "Father of all in every age,
> In every clime adored,
> By saint, by savage, and by sage,
> Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!"

Or in the nobler words of a later writer—

> "Name by what name you will, there is a Power,
> Ammon, Jehovah, Zeus, or Jupiter,

That searches nations, and in kindred hearts,
Finding a mirror, fills them with Himself."[1]

But such toleration might, at least, mean levelling down; and a God who is equally in all things is in nothing truly; a God who equally accepts all worships cannot be 'of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.' The moral distinction, like every other distinction, would vanish in His presence, and the many names we are allowed to give Him would confuse each other. His very universality would make Him the unknown and unknowable God, whose worship could have no positive value for thought, no inspiring influence on the will. Hence the same progress of thought which has carried us beyond all partial conceptions of the divine, and compelled us to think of God *as* God, as the Being who is all in all, has brought us in sight of a gulf of nescience, in which religion is in danger of being submerged. If, therefore, the effort of Christianity to maintain—on the level of universality, and at a stage of thought when

[1] Professor Nichol's *Hannibal* Prologue, Sc. 4. Cf. the words of Tennyson (*Akbar's Dream*):—

"That Infinite,
Within us, as without, that All-in-all,
And over all, the never-changing One
And ever-changing Many, in praise of Whom
The Christian bell, the cry from off the mosque,
And vaguer voices of Polytheism
Make but one music, harmonising 'Pray.'"

onesided subjective and onesided objective conceptions have equally become impossible—the idea of God as a living spiritual power, whose influence guides and sustains the moral life of man—if such an effort results, and must necessarily result, in self-contradiction and absurdity, then we shall be obliged to admit that religion has become permanently impossible to men, and that it will necessarily disappear so soon as the consciousness of its futility has been generally diffused.

We may put this difficulty more clearly by saying that it is possible to reach the idea of a unity which embraces and overcomes all differences only in two ways—either by the way of abstraction, or by a way which involves the idea of evolution or development. Spinoza, and in more recent times, Mr. Spencer, have shown us what comes of the former method. Just as in an earlier time an objective pantheism was reached by the thought of India, which gradually rose above all particular objects, even the highest, and confused them together in the one Being, of whom everything, and therefore nothing, can be said; so in later times Spinoza, rising above the opposition of thought and extension—themselves the ultimate abstractions of the subjective and the objective, the inner and the outer worlds—sought the divine in an absolute substance which, indifferently, was conceived as either

having an infinite number of attributes or none at all. And, in like manner, as I showed in a former lecture, Mr. Spencer finds God only in the unknowable infinite, which is beyond even the difference of subject and object, the last symbols by which we can represent or determine anything for ourselves. In this way it is possible to turn the idea of the God as a universal principle against subjective and objective religion alike, and to return upon a higher level to that pantheism from which subjective religion had furnished the means of escape. Nor is there wanting a certain plausibility in this way of solving the difficulties, into which we are driven by the effort to correct the opposite defects of the two great forms of earlier religion. Forced as we are by the movement of modern thought to conceive God as above every exclusive form, even the form of subjectivity, we seem to be driven by the same movement to deprive Him of every positive predicate. We cannot conceive Him as one merely objective force among other forces; for we should be immediately obliged to regard that force as absorbing and annihilating all other forces, and even the subject for which it is. Thus he who conceives God as an object is obliged, by the notion of God and the universality which attaches to it, to destroy the very notion of an object. He is driven to repeat the logic whereby polytheism is

changed into pantheism, and pantheism into the Buddhist nihilism. Again, it is equally impossible for us to recall or to maintain the attitude of mind of the pure monotheists, for whom God was merely one subject among other subjects; and though lifted high above them, the source of all their life, was yet related to them as an external and independent will. Our idea of God will not let us conceive of Him as external to anything, least of all, to the spirits who are made in His image, and who live and move and have their being in Him. We cannot, therefore, avoid thinking of God as a principle who is within as He is without us, present in self-consciousness as in consciousness, the presupposition, the life, and the end of all. But no sooner is this realised than it seems as if the attempt to say anything definite of Him must involve the contradiction of excluding Him from other things, or other things from Him. Hence Mr. Spencer is led to the conclusion that the God who is thus universal—and there obviously can be no other God for us—must be unknowable. And Comte, who appreciated the value of the Christian idea of a divine humanity, and in a way of his own tried to preserve it, yet maintains that the Christian attempt to unite monotheism with pantheism, and positively to define the principle of the universe by the aid of that idea, only ends in heaping together inconsistencies and

contradictions. Thus the Divine Being, conceived as the principle of unity in the world, is supposed to be beyond the reach of human thought, just because in thinking it we should be obliged to gather and concentrate in one, all the differences and oppositions which manifest themselves in the world. A God who was one object among others, who took the form of a plant, an animal, a man, or even of the all-embracing heaven, was capable of being apprehended in perception or imagination. A God who was a spiritual subject, even if He refused to take on 'the likeness of anything in the heavens above or in the earth beneath or in the waters under the earth,'—refused in short to be represented in any external form of perception or imagination,—could yet be grasped by the same reflexion whereby we become conscious of the self within us. But what, it is asked, can we make of a Being who is neither to be perceived or imagined as an object, nor to be conceived and determined as a subject, but only as the unity in which all difference begins and ends? Must we not content ourselves with the bare acknowledgment of such a Being, and bow our heads before the inscrutable? And when Christianity attempts to present God to us as the absolute Being, and at the same time as a *Logos*, or self-revealing spirit who manifests Himself in a special manner in and to man as the

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source of his higher life, shall we not say that it is obeying a necessity which comes with the growth of man's thought in religion, but a necessity which carries with it an impossibility?

Now in dealing with Mr. Spencer's theory I have, in a former lecture, suggested a partial answer to this despairing view. But it is well that we should recognise the full force of the reasons for it, and how naturally it arises out of the very development of thought which has produced the highest form of religion. It has arisen just because men have more clearly recognised than they ever did before what it is that they mean by speaking of *God*, and have therefore been led entirely to discard the imperfect ways of determining the idea of God with which they were satisfied in earlier times. By this development they are debarred from representing God under the purely objective or subjective forms which are their most familiar modes of consciousness, and therefore it seems as if they were debarred from representing Him in any way whatsoever. To the command of monotheism, that they should not make to themselves any graven image of the Divine Being, or in any way envisage Him under the likeness of an outward object, the advance of reflexion seems to have added the new command that they should not make to themselves any abstract conception of Him as a subject: what then remains

but to bow before Him as the inscrutable ground of existence, who, just because He is equally in all things, is nowhere apprehensible to the spirit of man? His very universality, which is the reason why we are willing to worship Him as God, lifts Him out of our reach, out of the reach of any intelligent worship.

Now, in the following lectures, we shall trace how, in the development of the religion of Christ out of the religion of Israel, a practical solution of this problem was reached. Here I wish rather to point out the general principle which must underlie any such solution. It is to be found, as I have already indicated, in the use of the two kindred ideas of *organic unity* and *evolution*. The former idea satisfies our demand for universality, in so far as it enables us to think of the world, as pantheistic religion thought of it, as one great whole or system, whose principle of unity lies in God; but at the same time to conceive this unity, not as absorbing all the differences of the world into itself, not as fatal to the independent individual existence of any of God's creatures, but as a principle of life manifested in each and all of them. In the words of Goethe, it enables us to conceive God as a Being who "fosters nature in Himself, Himself in nature, so that nothing that lives and moves and has its being in Him ever forgets His force or His spirit."

On the other hand, the idea of evolution enables us to escape from the conception of this unity as a substance, to which all things are *equally* related, and which, therefore, is not truly revealed in anything. For a God who, in the language already quoted from Pope, is 'as full and perfect in a hair as heart,' is one before whom all the differences of finite existence disappear, and of whom, just because we can in a sense attribute everything to Him, we cannot say anything distinctive. But the idea of evolution carries with it the conception that, while all existences manifest their Divine Original, they do not all manifest Him equally; but that there are grades of existence, rising from the inanimate to the animate, and from the animal to man, and in man's history from the stage in which he is nearest to the animal to a more and more full realisation of that which distinguishes him as man. It bids us regard the highest point to which creation reaches as the clearest revelation of what it all means. It bids us, in short, to find the key to the beginning in the end, and not the key to the end in the beginning. Hence, also, it justifies monotheism in treating the wishes and hopes of the best of men, not as mere wishes but also as prophecies; and that, not because they take us away from reality or protest against it, but because they enable us to see through superficial appearances to a principle of good,

working in the world and turning evil into its instrument.

For man, on this view, is not regarded simply as one being in the world among others, an object standing on the same level with them, and to be treated in the same way; but rather as, in a sense, including in himself the life of all the others, and reaching beyond it. He is a microcosm, for the whole process of nature is summed up in him; but he is more, because it culminates in him. In him the natural world comes to self-consciousness, and a new spiritual process of life begins, which through all his history is working toward a higher expression of itself.[1] Hence we are not to take as unreal and subjective anything in him which reaches beyond what is already realised in the world. It is true that, as he has subjective fancies which have no reference to anything that exists, so he has subjective impulses which point to nothing that ever will, or can, exist. But, as it would be a mistake to say that every thought in us that goes beyond immediate experience is illusive, so it would equally be a mistake

[1] Cf. the end of Browning's *Paracelsus* for a powerful expression of this idea:

> "All tended to mankind,
> And, man produced, all has its end thus far;
> But in completed man begins anew
> A tendency to God."

to think of every desire as futile that cannot find any object ready for its satisfaction. Self-consciousness, by the very nature of it, reaches beyond consciousness; and, as we return upon ourselves from the world, we rise above it. But we do not rise into empty air; we rise to the consciousness of something in us and in the world, which has not yet been realised, and for which all that has been realised may be regarded as a preparation. For if the process of the world is an evolution, the progressive manifestation of a principle that reveals itself more and more fully as the process advances, then the right way of looking at such desires—desires that are bound up with highest moral consciousness of man,—is to treat them as the first step towards their own realisation. As the wise man looks through the surface phenomena of life, and sees in apparent prosperity the seeds of decay and revolution, or in the small beginnings of an enterprise which attracts no outward attention, the promise of a great movement which will transform and elevate the lives of men; so the visions, longings, and aspirations of the good, of those who seek not themselves but the weal of mankind, are not only prophetic, but they are the beginning of the fulfilment of prophecy. They are themselves the germs or firstfruits of a future which has become visible to them, not because they have

yielded more than other men to subjective dreams and idle wishes for the impossible, but because, more than other men, they have got beyond such dreams; because their faithfulness has raised them to a point where the future good, which to all others is, so to speak, below the horizon, is already made visible. Their desire is thus not the mere wish of an individual, but the "spirit of the years to come yearning to mix itself with life." "Surely," says the prophet Amos, "the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth the secret to His servants the prophets."[1] Such an expression might be taken in the sense that the prophet is a soothsayer, miraculously gifted with the power of foretelling particular events to come; but its higher meaning is that which was indicated in the words of Christ, that the souls of men, who are not 'hypocrites' but true to themselves, can be trusted 'to discern the signs of the times,' and to see beneath their imperfection the promise of a better future.[2] Nay, even apart from seeing the promise of good without them, such men have it within them. For their own revolt against the evil of their day, their own aspiration after a better state of things, is itself the greatest of all 'the signs of the times,' as it is the first revelation of the power that will destroy the evil and bring about the good they desire.

[1] Amos iii. 7. [2] St. Matthew xvi. 3.

Now, it is by these principles that we can explain how the Jews came to be the great prophetic nation of the world. They were prophets of a better time, because their dissatisfaction with the present was not simply the ordinary disappointment with life, which makes so many men into pessimists, who

> "Sit beside the poisoned springs of life,
> Waiting for the morrow that shall free them from the strife."

It was not merely the dissatisfaction of those whose selfish hopes are defeated, or to whom their fulfilment has not brought the happiness they had expected. Their disappointment was not barren; because in their recoil upon themselves, they rose to the idea of a 'just God and a Saviour,' who must fulfil the hopes He has awakened in the hearts of His children. Their consciousness of a spiritual law within them passed immediately into the consciousness of a spiritual power above them; hence they could not regard the discord of the outward world with the demands of the spirit as a permanent fact, or as anything but a trial of their patience and their faith. Thus the ruin of all their earthly hopes did not with them produce a selfish despair, such as darkened the declining life of other ancient nations; it only gave occasion for that last and highest effort of prophecy which is preserved for us in the later chapters of Isaiah,

in which, on a background of the darkness of a time of war and disorder, the prophet paints the unselfish ideal of a kingdom of peace and righteousness, into which all nations shall be admitted. Of one of the greatest men of the modern time—Oliver Cromwell—who was deeply impregnated with the spirit of the Old Testament, we are told by one who knew him that, "in the dark places of the war, in the high places of the field, hope shone in him like a pillar of fire after it had gone out in every one else." So we may say of the nation of Israel that its undying wrath at evil, its steadfast refusal to believe that it is a final or ultimate fact, its unquenchable hope for the regeneration of man, and its immovable trust in the divine justice, made it far greater in defeat and disaster than other nations have been in their highest hours of triumph. It, and perhaps it alone, showed the power of turning the decay and destruction of its political existence into the basis for a higher spiritual life. And this of itself enables us to understand how it was only out of Judah that the religion of humanity could arise.

NOTE A. ON THE UNITY OF PANTHEISM AND MONOTHEISM.

It is impossible here to discuss all the difficulties connected with this conception; but it may be useful to show a little more definitely how such an application of the ideas of organic unity and development, as is suggested in the preceding lecture, may assist in solving them. The question, as ordinarily stated, relates to what is termed the *Personality of God*. Apart, however, from the theological use of the term Person in the doctrine of the Trinity, which makes it unsuitable to express the *Unity* of the Divine Nature, the word Personality seems to me to call up misleading legal associations. When we apply it to man, it almost compels us to regard him in one limited aspect of his being, as a subject of rights; hence we might say that even *man* is much more than a person. And when we apply it to God, it suggests that He is to be conceived, as He was conceived by Judaism, as an abstract subject who is not immanent in the world. While, however, the word may be objected to, we cannot blink the question which is connected with it, whether God—the ultimate principle of unity in the universe, is to be regarded as an intelligent or self-conscious Being. It has been maintained by many critics that it is a necessary consequence of modern Idealism to dissolve the individuality of God, and, indeed, also the individuality of man, in a universal impersonal Thought, which is attached to no Thinker; and that, therefore, such Idealism is in result identical with the Spinozistic philosophy, which merges all finite existence in the absolute substance. To this charge I venture to answer that an Idealism which has taken up into itself the principle of evolution can avert, and, so far as I see, it *alone* can avert such a logical result. This follows from what has been said in the preceding lecture. For it has there been shown that it is only on the basis of such a theory that we can think of God—as He must be thought of—as the principle of unity in all things, and yet conceive Him as a self-conscious, self-determining Being. For, on the one hand, those who, like Spinoza and Mr. Spencer (see Vol. I. p. 104), have realised the idea of God as an absolute and infinite being—the ultimate

unity of all existence and of all thought—have generally been led to deny the possibility of regarding Him as revealed to us by any one form of finite existence more than another, and therefore the possibility of knowing Him at all. And a God who is "as full as perfect in a hair as heart," who is as near to, and as far from man, as He is from a tree or a stone, may be said, indifferently, either to have every predicate or none at all. The predicates by which we could determine Him neutralise each other, and leave us with the empty idea of an abstract being or power. On the other hand, those who cling to the idea that there is an *absolute* principle of individuality in man and in other finite substances, seem necessarily to be led to a denial of all real connexion or relation between such substances. And if, like Leibniz and his greatest modern disciple, Lotze, they still introduce the idea of God, as a principle of unity or relation between finite substances, they are forced in doing so to contradict themselves, and to use the language of that very pantheistic theory which they began by repudiating. Thus Leibniz, as I have shown elsewhere,[1] begins by asserting that every monad is "like a separate world," and that it is "as durable, as self-sufficient, and as absolute as the universe itself"; and he goes on to maintain that the only connexion of monads with the world is that they represent it, *i.e.* that they have merely *ideal* and not *real* relations to the other monads; but he ends with the pantheistic assertion that "God alone is the primitive unity, or simple originative substance, of which all created or derivative monads are the productions, *born as it were of the continual fulgurations of divinity from moment to moment.*"[2] And Lotze, in like manner, after coming very close to atomism in his account of individual finite substances, finds that he can account for reciprocal action between such substances only by regarding them "as parts of a single and real being,"[3] or, as

[1] *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, i. 64.

[2] Erdmann's *Leibniz*, p. 708. *Monadologie*, § 47.

[3] Lotze's *Metaphysics*, i. 165 (Eng. Transl.). Lotze's theory in this and other respects comes very near to the early theory of Kant explained in the Dissertation (*De mundi sensibilis et intelligibilis forma et principiis*). Cf. *Crit. Phil. of Kant*, i. 168 *seq.*

he elsewhere puts it, as the acts of the Divine Substance. In particular, I would notice how the Berkeleian doctrine that each individual is immediately conscious only of his own ideas, as states of his own consciousness—a doctrine that naturally goes along with Lotze's Individualism—leads him to deny or to overlook relativity of the self to the not-self, and therefore makes it impossible for him to admit that in any sense we can "see all things in God," or, in other words, that we can be conscious of them as determined by the idea of God. Thus, by a kind of logical nemesis, those who begin with the abstract Individual are forced to end with the abstract Universal.

But if, in accordance with the principles of Idealism, we regard the infinite not as an abstraction, but as a self-determining principle (cf. Vol. I. Lecture IV.), if we follow out the doctrine of the correlation of inner and outer experience (see Lecture V.), and if we interpret that doctrine in the light of the idea of evolution, and the consequences which have been drawn from it (Lectures VI., VII., and the preceding Lecture), —viz., that nature comes to self-consciousness in man, and that, therefore, the process of man's life is a continuation of the self-revelation of the Absolute Being which begins in nature—it then becomes possible to think of *God* as the principle of unity in all things, and yet as a living God in whose image man is made. And, on the same view, it becomes possible to think of *man* as "a partaker in the divine nature," and, therefore, as a self-conscious and self-determining spirit, without gifting him with an absolute individuality, which would cut him off from all union and communion with his fellow creatures and with God. I do not deny that there are many difficulties in this view, difficulties with which I have not attempted to deal. But it seems to me this is the only line of thought which makes it possible to escape the opposite absurdities of an *Individualism* which dissolves the unity of the universe into atoms, and an abstract *Monism* which leaves no room for any real individuality either in God or in man: not to speak of the still greater absurdity of holding *both* of these one-sided views at once.

LECTURE FOURTH.

THE PROBLEM OF THE LATER JUDAISM AND THE ANSWER OF JESUS.

The Difficulty in which Subjective Religion ends—The Practical Idealism of Jesus—In what Sense Jesus was Original—Antithetic Form of His Teaching—How the Belief in a Special Power of Evil arises in Later Judaism—The Doctrine of John the Baptist and its Relation to the Teaching of Jesus—The Kingdom of Heaven on Earth—How Jesus solves the Problem of Evil—His Optimism on the Basis of Pessimism—Note on the Belief in Evil Spirits.

In the last lecture I spoke of the double necessity, in a religion which should avoid the defects of subjective and of objective religion alike, of doing justice to the opposition between the subject and the object, and yet of rising above it and reconciling it. Such a religion must bring the consciousness of God into its true form as the consciousness of a unity which is beyond all difference, while yet refusing the facile resource of a universality which simply lets the differences drop. The temptation to this fallacious path, whether it take the superficial form of an

agnosticism, which renounces the hope of rising to any reconciling unity at all, or the deeper form of a pantheism which regards all differences as the shadows of our cave, is continually becoming greater, as the advance of human life and thought makes men aware of the depth of the divisions and oppositions to be overcome. And, therefore, it would be felt most strongly in reference to the opposition of the ideal and the real, between what ought to be and what is, were it not that, to a mind deeply impressed with the moral antagonism, nothing can be so repugnant as the doubt of the reality, or the assertion of the unreality of these distinctions. At the same time, such a mind must feel in the strongest way the opposite danger of a dualism which makes these distinctions absolute, and thereby deprives them of their moral meaning. The moral consciousness calls for a unity beyond its utmost oppositions and distinctions, yet it refuses to accept it on any terms which do not leave the reality of those oppositions and distinctions unaffected. Thus, on the one hand, it seems to stand out for dualism, for pessimism, for the absolute opposition of what ought to be to what is; yet, on the other hand, it would be in despair if its protest were accepted as final. It hates any theory that would 'heal its hurt slightly, or cry Peace, when there is no peace': yet, it cannot reconcile itself to the idea that there is no healing for its wound, no

way to put an end to its spiritual conflict with itself and the world. Hence, like Judaism, it cherishes a faith in the realisation of good, which yet it thrusts away into the past or the future; or, like Stoicism, it combines an optimism in general with a pessimism in particular; or, like Kant, it takes back as postulates of reason, what it surrenders as objects of knowledge. It lives, as it were, in the shadow of death, but it never ceases to believe in light and life, to long for them and to prophesy them.

The unique character of Christianity lay in this, that it was the response to the demand of such a divided moral consciousness. It was reconciliation for spirits that were in the deepest contradiction with themselves and with the world. It was an optimism addressed to those who were overpowered and possessed by the consciousness of misery and sin, good news of the kingdom of heaven to those whose souls were penetrated and oppressed with a sense of all the evils done under the sun. And it presented all this, not as realisable in some far off place and time, or in an ideal world of thought, but as realised there and then,—in an immediate consciousness so full and free that for it evil was weakness manifest, and good an outflow of divine life which nothing could resist. When Jesus said, 'If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say to this sycamore tree, be thou plucked up by the roots and be thou

planted in the sea, and it should obey you,'[1] he was not speaking of any mere power of working outward miracles; rather he was expressing, in the face of suffering, sacrifice, and death, the triumphant consciousness of spiritual life as a power with which no outward force is commensurable, as indeed the power which makes and remakes the world, and for which all the force of nature is but the instrument.

> "Winds blow and waters roll
> Strength to the brave and power and deity."

The secret of Jesus was the unswerving, uncompromising, practical idealism with which he faced the evils of life and the darkness of death, and refused to regard them as other than weapons in the hand of an omnipotent goodness which, in spite of them, and through them, is irresistibly realising its divine purpose.

There has been much controversy about the originality of Christianity, and especially of the teaching of Jesus—a controversy which has led to little profitable result, because it has dealt mainly with the particular details and not with the meaning and spirit of the whole. Just as the point of distinction between man and the other animals has been sought in some special bone, or sinew, or convolution of the brain, so the distinctive excellence and originality of Christianity has been sought in

[1] Luke xvii. 6.

some special ethical precept or principle, to which nothing analogous can be found in any previous religious or philosophical system. There is, however, no originality which we may not fritter away on such a method; for, in a sense, all moral truth is implicitly contained in the first experiences of a self-conscious being, and, therefore, glimpses of the highest to which man can rise may be expected even in the earliest stages of human development. In this region originality consists only in the deepening and widening of generally recognised truths, or in applying with clear consciousness and systematic purpose, ideas which were before apprehended as passing lights of intuition. It is, therefore, little to the purpose to say that Jewish prophets described a suffering 'servant of God,' who "bore the sins and carried the sorrows of others"; or that Jewish Rabbis long before Christ, or even Chinese moralists before Confucius, formulated the golden rule. As little is it to the purpose to point to Plato's assertion that it is better to suffer than to do injustice, or to his proof that there is a spiritual life in man which death cannot affect. These and many other points of contact between Christian and pre-Christian thought undoubtedly exist; yet, when we look at the ideas and character of Jesus as a whole, we can see that all such scattered elements have there acquired a new meaning, as the elements of a new unity—

a new *organic* conception of human life in its relations to nature and to God—which, taken in its entirety, has no previous counterpart, and which, indeed, constitutes the greatest step that has ever been gained in the spiritual development of man.

It is true that the inner self-consistency and completeness of the new religious consciousness is partly concealed from us by the aphoristic character of the words of Jesus, which present only one aspect of things at a time, and generally present it in a form so bold and epigrammatic as to cast all other aspects into the shade. It is concealed from us also by what we may call the dialectical form of those utterances, *i.e.* the way in which complementary but contrasted elements of truth are set side by side, each of them being stated so absolutely as to lead to a verbal contradiction with the others. The religious idea which Jesus had to reveal was so complex that it could not be expressed in language generally intelligible, except by the method of first emphasising one side and then another, and leaving the mind of the hearer, aided by the impression of the living personality of the teacher, to make the necessary synthesis. Nay, we may say that the essential aim which bound the whole doctrine together—the aim of revealing a reconciling principle which could overcome the deepest antagonisms of life—necessitated a manner of speech in

which the contradiction was brought to the front, and thrown as a spiritual problem into the soul of the learner. Hence we have a multitude of antitheses, sometimes drawn out into parables, sometimes compressed into axioms of spiritual life, each of which, to a superficial view, seems to contain rather a problem than the solution of it; for they bring opposite ideas into such close combination, that we are again and again tempted to cast away one half of the lesson in order to save the other. Are we to regard the Gospel as the fulfilment of the Law, or as the destruction of it? Does Jesus authorise, or finally abolish the Messianic hopes of the Jews? Is his morality intended to be one of negative self-sacrifice, or of positive self-realisation? Does he reveal an immanent, or a transcendent God; and are we ultimately to class his religion as a form of monotheism, or as a form of pantheism? To such questions no simple answer can be given, except by an undue emphasising of one set of utterances and an undue neglect of others. Nay, to give such an answer, we should often need to tear a sentence in two and to reject one half of it. In regard to every one of them we are forced to say, that what the question itself expresses as a choice of alternatives is really a vital opposition of thought, which Jesus seems to have acknowledged and even developed to its utmost intensity, but yet which it

was his aim and purpose to transcend. And when we have got so far, the further question must arise in our minds, whether all these different antitheses are not forms of one great antithesis of the spiritual life, which, if soluble at all, have only one fundamental solution. If this should turn out to be the case, then we shall have to seek for the originality of Jesus just in the nature of this solution, and nowhere else.

Now, in speaking of the development of subjective religion, I have already indicated one form of the contradiction with which Jesus had to deal. The whole history of the religion of Israel is a history of the development of the moral consciousness, and consequently of the deepening and widening of the opposition between that *which ought to be* and that *which is*. And in the end, that opposition becomes so strongly expressed as to approximate to a Manichaean dualism. For the unsophisticated mind of early times, the general problem of evil scarcely existed. The Divine Being was not yet regarded as a universal source of justice, nor was the idea of goodness yet separated from its natural root in the ties of kindred. At this stage, therefore, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was regarded as hostile to foreign nations and their gods, and also to the degenerate Israelite who worshipped any other god, and thereby—for the two things necessarily went

together—broke away from the unity of the national life. The supreme sin was to refuse to bow at the altars of Jehovah, and not to be ready to come 'to the help of Jehovah against the mighty.' God was conceived on the analogy of the head of a tribe, who dispensed good to His own people and evil to their enemies, and who, in His relations to the individuals of His own people, rewarded faithful service and punished rebellion as the greatest, and, indeed, as the only crime. In such a time the only difficulty seemed to be that the triumph of Israel was not complete, or that the rewards and punishments were so long delayed. But, as the religion of the prophets soared above national limits, and Jehovah came to be regarded as the God of all men and of all nations—a God who was not bound up with the existence of the Jewish people, but might punish it for its sins even by the crushing of its national life; or who, if He maintained that life, did so only that through Israel 'all nations might be blessed'—the conceptions of good and evil became universalised and purified, and it became more difficult to conceive that the same Divine Being, who was the author of good, should also be the creator of evil. Hence, *pari passu* with the development of ethical monotheism and the purification of the idea of God's goodness from national partiality, we find a growing tendency among the Jews to admit that evil

has its source in a subordinate, but relatively independent, power. The Persian dualism of good and evil spirits thus found entrance into Israel just because of the widening of morality and religion beyond their merely national forms. The beginnings of a belief in an evil power which works against goodness and God, are traceable in some passages in the later books of the Old Testament, as *e.g.* in the appearance of Satan in the book of Job, where, however, he seems to be still regarded as a minister of God.[1] But in the interval, between the close of the prophetic writings and the Christian era—as we see from some of the Apocryphal books—the idea of a kingdom of evil, a realm of demons ruled by Satan or Beelzebub, and forming the opposite counterpart to a realm of angels ruled by God, had gained possession of the Jewish mind. And to the influence of such demons it became customary to attribute, not only the suggestions of evil in the human

[1] In Zechariah iii. 1 Satan appears as the accuser of Joshua the high priest before the angel of the Lord. Isaiah (xlv. 7) seems to protest against the Persian dualism, when he makes Jehovah say: "I form the light and create darkness: I make peace and create evil, I, Jehovah, do these things." One of the most significant traces of the incoming of the dualistic mode of thought is to be found in 1 Chronicles xxi. 1, where the statement in 2 Samuel xxiv. 1 that Jehovah moved David to number the people is changed into the assertion that "Satan provoked David to number Israel." Cf. Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, iii. 40.

heart, but also most of the afflictions that flesh is heir to. In particular, as we see from the New Testament, all kinds of mental disturbance, and all diseases which are accompanied by violent convulsions or sudden collapse of energy, were conceived to be the effects of demoniacal possession. So far had this dualistic view of things gone, that, to the popular consciousness, goodness presented itself as a feebly struggling power of resistance, which with continually greater difficulties was maintaining itself against the established authority of evil. The 'prince of this world' was the devil, and the servants of God in this world were in the enemy's country. It is true that with this always went the idea that those who were fighting for the good cause, were in alliance with the ultimate power of the universe; and that therefore the good cause must ultimately prevail, and the kingdom of heaven be set up on earth. But this faith could not remove the oppression of the immediate sense of the weakness of good and the strength of evil. The good man 'in this present evil world' seemed to be always swimming against the tide, or resisting the natural bent of things; and the hope of deliverance took the shape, not of an anticipation of victory as the result of continued effort, but of a prophetic expectation of some mighty interference from above, that would suddenly change and even invert the whole system of nature.

Now in this consciousness of the time there were undoubtedly many elements of superstition. The pessimistic surrender of the present world to evil, the hope of a sudden catastrophic overturn which should give the victory to good, the belief that this world is a kingdom of Beelzebub which can only be overthrown by the miraculous intervention of a Messiah revealing himself in outward signs and wonders, seem to involve a purely outward and, we might almost say, a scenic view of the movement of history. Yet such popular conceptions were really the indication of a stage in the development of the moral consciousness far more advanced than the superficial optimistic hopes of the early religion of Israel, in which the faithfulness of the nation to its God was regarded as certain at once to bring about its triumph over all its enemies. To this it may be added that the outward movement of the history of Israel was such as to stimulate the development of the religious idea in this direction. If we think of the deep spiritual aspirations which had grown up in the later period of the Jewish history, and had found expression in some of the Psalms, and, on the other hand, of the hard struggle with circumstances and with the overpowering material pressure of Persian, Greek, and Roman despotism, through which Judah had to maintain its faith in the God of Israel, we can understand

how natural it might seem to those who still held to that faith to regard the whole world, all its powers and principalities, spiritual and natural, as banded together against the good cause, and to think that nothing but some miraculous interference of the far-off divine power, could bring about their deliverance. The mournful minor key of the Psalms,—lifting the solitary protest of the heart against triumphant evil and appealing to the God of Justice to break forth from the clouds in which He is hidden, and to reveal Himself as a just God and a Saviour,—becomes the expression of the permanent attitude of the saints in this world. "Give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man,"[1] was the natural utterance of those who were outwardly weak and oppressed, while at the same time they were conscious of an inward life which lifted them above all their oppressors. And this cry *de profundis* gained a still deeper pathos from the fact that those who raised it had become aware that they needed to be delivered, not only from outward but from inward evils, not only from foreign oppressors but from themselves, not only from Greek or Roman tyranny, but from their own iniquities. Thus the hope of a deliverance from above, to those who were helpless against the wrongs of the world and helpless even against the evil of their own hearts, naturally gave birth to the prophecy of a kingdom

[1] Psalms lx. 11.

of heaven which was not to arise by any natural process, nor by any human agency, but which, by a direct divine intervention, was to destroy the established powers of the world, and set itself up in their place.

In the light of this strained consciousness of evil, for which the power of darkness was so near, and the power of light and life so far off, we can understand the electric effect of the word of John the Baptist, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." It meant that that which had hitherto seemed so weak, so poor, so destitute of all inward and outward resources, was immediately to manifest itself as the great power of the world; that right was now at length to show itself as might; that the deliverance from evils within and without, which had been longed for but hardly expected, except in some dim future or in another world, was already at the door. It awakened the hope of a triumph of good in the face of an apparently complete victory of evil, and turned a distant possibility, to which faith had been clinging, into an immediate prospect. The word, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," was thus the last word of prophecy; and it was the most potent of all its words, because it was delivered at a time when, to the awakened conscience of men, the powers of this world seemed to be almost wholly evil.

But the oracles of prophecy are always ambiguous,

and they may be read in a higher or a lower sense, according to the point of view of the hearer. In the general consciousness of the Jews, vulgar hopes of the triumph of the people of Israel over all its enemies, of an outward reign of the faithful nation over a subject world, were mingled with the expectation of a final manifestation that good was stronger than evil, and of the deliverance of man from its power. Even the idea that help was to come from God alone, and not from man, might be interpreted in the sense that it was to come by an external miracle, which should, without any effort of their own, put them in possession of the good they sought. On the other hand, it might mean a spiritual reinforcement of man's faith, by which he should be enabled to realise the good after which he had been so long striving in vain. The proclamation of the kingdom of heaven was, therefore, the stirring up of the deepest springs of all that was best and all that was worst in the consciousness of the time. It was the provocation of a struggle between the deepest spiritual forces in man's nature,—a struggle in which more distinct moral issues were involved than in any previous religious conflict or controversy.

The first step toward the κρίσις, the distinction and division of these confused moral forces into opposing hosts, was made by John the Baptist in his demand for repentance as the preparation for

the coming kingdom. This word involved the lesson that for each man the great hindrance to the coming of the highest good he could desire, was to be found in himself; that he was an accomplice in all the ills from which he suffered. Hence the attitude of one who desired to partake in the blessings of the kingdom, was not to be an inert receptiveness of a good to be poured down from above; but, so to speak, the enlisting in an army which was only waiting for its leader, and which, in the meantime, had to discipline itself into readiness for his service. The gift had, indeed, to come from above, but it would come only to those who had their loins girt and their lamps burning, who were waiting and prepared to receive it. This is the first blow at the idea of an *external* kingdom of heaven, which should be established among men by a transcendent act of divine power.

So far, however, in the teaching of the Baptist, the idea presented to us is only that of a *moral* preparation for a *religious* deliverance, which has to be externally added to it. On the other hand, the distinctive characteristic of the teaching of Jesus is, that in it the endeavour of man and the gift of God are brought together, and morality and religion are unified. To the Jew, even at the point of view of the Baptist, the moral life was an ineffectual effort of the finite to raise itself

to the infinite, of sinful man to bring himself into harmony with the divine law of perfection. But this effort necessarily fails, and to it, therefore, the Divine Being must externally add a completion which it has not in itself; just as in the Kantian philosophy immortality and God had to be postulated to give room for the accomplishment of the endless task of morality, and to secure to the goodness thus perfected the happiness it deserves. But the gospel of Jesus rapidly passed from the form, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," to the form, "The kingdom of heaven is already in the midst of you." It is already present in the reconciled consciousness of Jesus himself and of his disciples, who, as they call God their Father, can no longer look upon the world as subjected to the power of evil. Thus the essential change in the Christian mode of thought is, that the divine life ceases to be postponed to a future, either on earth or beyond the grave. It has, indeed, a future, in the sense that the seed has a future in the plant that springs from it; but the principle of that future is already here. The leaven is already working in the mass, "until the whole be leavened." The religion of prophecy is at an end, and the religion of fulfilment and fruition has come. "All the prophets and the law prophesied until John," but, "from henceforth the kingdom of heaven suffereth

violence, and the violent take it by force."[1] "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see, and hear the things that ye hear: for many prophets and kings have desired to see what ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear what ye hear, and have not heard them."[2] Men need not henceforth look beyond their immediate life, or listen to those who say, 'Lo! here,' or 'Lo! there.'[3] They need only to become conscious of what they have and are, from the point of view to which Christ has raised them. God is not a transcendent power who rules from a far-away heaven; He is without as He is within; and the Christian is not therefore as one who holds an outpost in the land of the enemy, but as one who knows that all things work together for the success of him who seeks to realise the good, even those things that seem to offer most resistance to his efforts. To such a consciousness sorrow can only be the trial of faith, the discipline of man's soul, whereby he is made capable of a higher good. And even sin, as it is possible only through the self-ignorance of a lower stage of development, must be, if not the means to a higher good, yet at least the condition through the negation of which it is attained.

The great problem of the Old Testament, the

[1] Matt. xi. 12, 13. [2] Luke x. 23, 24; Matt. xiii. 16, 17.
[3] Matt. xxiv. 23.

difficulty that vexes the soul of Job—"Why is the course of the world unjust?" "Why is the righteous man troubled, and why is the wicked man allowed to succeed?"—now for the first time meets with a real answer. The righteous man is troubled, because his righteousness is yet in germ, and it cannot be developed except through trouble. Evil is or appears to be triumphant, because its immediate triumph is necessary to its final extinction. The course of the world is just; but it is not justice to a being who is in process of growth to treat the life of to-day as if it were final, and had no reference to the past and the future. In seeking for the law of the world, the whole process of development of the individual man and of humanity must be taken into account; and that process has a negative, as well as a positive aspect. The future comes out of the present, not by the unfolding of an already completed life which contains already preformed in it all that it can ever manifest, but by a change which involves the breaking up and renewal of the whole form of the organism. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone."[1] The richer life of the future cannot be attained except by a loss in the immediate life of the present. And, in the case of a conscious and self-conscious being, this

[1] John xii. 24.

means that pain, self-denial, self-renunciation, self-sacrifice, is the only way whereby joy and self-realisation—the goodness which is happiness, and the happiness which is goodness—can be reached.

Jesus, then, solves the problem of life—which had seemed so hard to the saints of the Old Testament, and which had ultimately led to the almost dualistic view of existence which prevailed in the pre-Christian era—by teaching that all the phenomena which had given rise to a doubt of the justice of God, and even to a belief that He had abandoned this world to the power of evil, were explicable as necessary for the development of the highest good. Thus calamities are to be regarded as not, or at least not merely, punishments for sin, but rather as tokens of God's goodness that will not allow men to abide in evil. Nay, even those furious outbursts of persecuting hate, which seem to be the most decisive manifestations of the spirit of evil, are to be taken as the opportunities for the decisive triumph of good over it. Bacon's saying, that "prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament and adversity of the New," is the epigrammatic expression of a truth. The general idea which pervades the Old Testament is that, at least after a short space of trial, faithfulness must be rewarded by outward success; whereas the New Testament, —looking at calamity, suffering, and conflict with

evil as the necessary means of spiritual development, and regarding the whole course of the life of the individual and of humanity as the opportunity for such development,—is prepared to see a divine justice and a divine love even in the darkest sorrows and the utmost outbreaks of the powers of evil. The Christian is prepared to build a temple to God on the grave of every earthly hope, and even out of the stones of the sepulchre. "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it,"[1] is a principle which turns even the prison and the cross into the manifestations of divine goodness, and uses the utmost violence of human selfishness and malice as the opportunity for the outflow of an infinite love which, so to speak, absorbs it and swallows it up.

Our ordinary view of the world wavers between optimism and pessimism; but, as it approaches optimism, it is apt to become shallow and superficial, and, as it approaches pessimism, it is apt to become morbid and distorted. Men who are satisfied with life as it is, are mostly those who live in a healthy surface activity which keeps them from reflexion, and hurries them on from moment to moment, and from object to object, without allowing time for the sense of dissatisfaction to arise. With men of such a type, an optimistic temper may maintain itself

[1] Matt. xvi. 25; Mark viii. 35; Luke ix. 24.

so long as circumstances are favourable, and no great shock of disappointment or failure comes to throw them back upon themselves. But such optimism is merely the contentment of those who have never fathomed their own hearts, and who, just for that reason, are not aware of the discrepancy between what they want and what they get. It is the optimism of children, who as yet know neither the world nor themselves. But reflexion, as it brings to us the consciousness of our finitude, sets the infinite over against us, as that which is unattainable, and yet as that which alone can satisfy us. It causes us "to look before and after," and therefore to "pine for what is not." It makes us aware of the division between the real and the ideal both in ourselves and in the world; and the more this is felt, the deeper is the aching sense of want. World-weariness and self-disgust, the hopelessness of an *Ecclesiastes* in the contemplation of "all the evils done under the sun," the despair of an Obermann, who finds that the heart of man is a "gulf in which the void always returns," and that all finite satisfactions, in the expressive phrase of Goethe, are "corrupted ere they are broken from the tree,"—these are in a sense diseased and morbid feelings; but, in another sense, they are only the natural fruits of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And if such reflexion takes a moral direction, it is

equally natural that the world should come to be regarded,—as it was regarded by the Jews at the beginning of the Christian era,—as a sphere dominated over by an evil power which can be overthrown only by some stupendous revolution, by some violent interference from above, which shall change the whole present system of things. "No one can enter into the house of the strong man, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house."[1]

Now the wounds of reflexion can only be healed by a deeper reflexion. As the paralysis of scepticism can be removed only by the philosophy which detects a principle of truth that is deeper than any possible doubt, so the despair of pessimism can be repelled only by the insight which detects "a soul of goodness in things evil." The power of the teaching of Christ lies in this: that he starts from the Jewish consciousness which, in its realisation of the hindrances to good, had all but reached the point of dualistic pessimism; and that he rises to the idea of a goodness, whose triumph nothing can hinder, which is beyond the antagonism, and which uses the antagonism itself as a means for its own manifestation. The strange doctrine of the Church as to the descent of Christ into Hell no doubt has another meaning; but it might be taken as

[1] Mark iii. 27.

a poetic expression of the fact that Christ's belief in a divine love which turns all things into good, was not reached by evading the full meaning of the experience of evil, but by taking it at its worst, and overcoming it. Now the constant charge made against optimistic writers is that they gloss over the difficulties of life, that they make things too easy, hiding from themselves, and sophistically trying to hide from others, the realities of human misery and ruin, and the still more dreadful realities of human guilt and sin—the pollution and cruelty, the selfish indulgence and the equally selfish ambition and greed of man. Their reconciling theories, therefore, involve a denial, or, at least, an ignoring of the depth of the evils that beset us, and a confusing of the deepest moral distinctions. So when Emerson, one of the purest of modern optimists, declares that "all loss, all pain is particular," that "good is positive and evil merely privative"; that "while a man seeks good ends, he is strong with the whole strength of nature," or even that "evil is good in the making"; and that "the carrion in the sun will convert itself to grass and flowers; and man, though in brothels, or gaols, or on gibbets, is on his way to all that is good and true,"—we are inclined partly to explain such utterances by the lofty and pure, but somewhat ethereal and abstract nature of the man, and to contrast them unfavourably with the

sad and almost despairing words of his friend Carlyle, whose apprehension of the evils of the world was so close and vital, and whose belief in divine justice seemed often to reduce itself to a distant hope. So when Browning with cheery optimism sings, "God's in His heaven; all's right with the world," or Schelling tells us, that all evil vanishes when we view it *sub specie æternitatis*, men who are of less happy temperament than Browning, or who find it harder than Schelling to lose the divisions of life in the unity of abstract thought, are apt to revolt violently against such seemingly easy ways of escape from the clouds into the serene ether of religious mysticism, and to say with Shakespeare, "He jests at scars who never felt a wound." Even Hegel, in spite of his constant insistence on the negative element in existence, and on "the earnestness, the pain, the labour, and the patience" involved in that element, does not entirely escape the accusation of 'healing the hurt' of man too 'slightly,' of explaining away the darker aspects of life, and of confusing the opposites whose antagonism he seeks to reconcile.

It is a significant fact that no one has ever brought such an accusation against the greatest optimist whom the world has ever seen. And the reason seems to be, that in the life and death of Jesus the consciousness of suffering and evil, not

as a far-off subject of reflexion, but as an immediate and personal experience, is raised to the highest conceivable point of intensity. As Jesus is presented to us in the Gospels, he "bears the sins and sorrows of men," not in any remote theological sense, but in the sense that his deep personal sympathy with others makes their sorrows, and even their sins, his own; that it is his life-work to destroy both in their deepest roots and sources; and that in doing so he is forced to share in the bitterest forms of human suffering, and to draw upon himself the utmost malice of human passion. Neither is his endurance of these evils the hard constancy of the Stoic who defies the world, nor the passive resignation of the mystic who withdraws himself from it. From no lips ever came sterner expressions of antagonism to the "evil deeds, evil words, and evil thoughts" which ruin the life of men; or more unmeasured and even fierce condemnation of the hypocrites who put evil for good and wrong for right. But as, while seeking with all his power to soothe and relieve the darkest physical ills of man, he yet constantly maintains that suffering may be only a blessing in disguise; so, while contending against spiritual evils, he yet uncompromisingly asserts that the power of wicked men is given them from above, and given just in order to the highest manifestation of good. Nay, he asserts that

in evil men themselves there is a deeper will for good beneath their will for evil, which might, and perhaps we may even say must, ultimately overthrow it. The prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,"[1] is the expression—in the face of the darkest possible manifestation of human malice—of a faith not only in God, but also in man, and in the inextinguishable possibility of good in him. It is this certainty of ultimate triumph, this combination of the despair of pessimism with an optimism that overreaches and overpowers it, nay, even that absorbs it as an element into itself, which constitutes the unique character of the religion of Jesus.

NOTE B. ON THE BELIEF IN AN EVIL SPIRIT OR SPIRITS.

One of the most perplexing phenomena in the history of religion is the growth and decay of the idea of a devil, as a great power of evil who is personified, in opposition to God as the power of goodness. This idea finds its most distinct expression in the Persian dualism, which sets Ormuzd with his angels in opposition to Ahriman with his demons on all but equal terms; though with the reservation that the former must ultimately triumph in the great struggle for existence. Looking at the popular Jewish beliefs which are presupposed in the New Testament, we might be inclined to say that they rose above the Persian dualism only in so far as they made this reservation more distinct and prominent. Jewish monotheism, indeed, was too absolute to admit that the powers of evil had any strength in them to resist Jehovah. Still, it was allowed that the power of evil had actually become established upon earth for a time, and even that evil spirits often found lodgment in the souls of men. And the faith still maintained in the almightiness of good took the form of a belief in a miraculous revolution, to be accomplished by a Messiah from heaven. That this was the ordinary framework of Jewish belief into which Christianity came, and which it had to transform, we do not need to look beyond the Synoptic Gospels to see.

The origin of this way of thinking may probably be explained thus. The first distinct opposition of gods and demons was due to an age in which the social unity did not extend beyond the limits of a tribe or kinship, and in which the god of one kinship was a demon to another (cf. Vol. I. 242). The early Christian belief that the gods of the heathen were devils was thus a survival of a time in which all the gods of foreigners were regarded in that light. In the early religion of Israel there are traces of a mode of conception, which does not altogether deny the power of the gods of other nations, but treats

them as *unfriendly*, or, what at this stage of thought is much the same thing, as *evil* powers. But as the ethical monotheism of the prophets prevailed, and the gods of the heathen sank into "dumb idols," it might seem that no room was left for the devil. Thus Isaiah protests against dualism, in language that has been already quoted, "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace and create evil: I, the Lord, do all these things." At the same time, there were influences brought into play by the very triumph of monotheism which tended to maintain dualistic modes of thought, or to favour their introduction from Persian sources. In the first place, as we have seen, the same movement by which Jehovah was made the God of all men and all nations, tended also to separate the natural from the moral, the rights and duties of the individual from the ties of kinship or nationality. Disconnected from the bond of blood-relationship, which united men in families and nations, the law, to which men as spiritual beings were subjected, was not yet conceived as binding them all together in one great society. It could only, therefore, take the form of a divine law revealing itself in the inner life of the individual, and putting him under the weight of an infinite obligation. But, by this recoil upon the subjective, the outward course of the world and of the social life of man were deprived of all moral meaning, and seemed to be abandoned to evil powers, against which the individual had a hard struggle to maintain the purity of his inner life. Thus the very causes which universalised and deepened the moral consciousness, favoured the growth of a pessimistic view of everything outside of the subjective moral consciousness itself. The pious soul seemed to have no hope left to it of overcoming the world by an aggressive goodness, and might be well content if it could defend itself against the 'prince of this world,' whose ministers were besieging it on every side. Moral and physical evils were the proof of the power of the devil and his angels over the world and even over the body and soul of man, and the only hope was in a miraculous Messianic deliverance.

How far Jesus really participated in any such view of things,

and how far it was reflected back upon his life from the conceptions of those who first recorded its events, it is not easy to say. Here, as elsewhere, we see him through the medium of modes of conception which are vitally opposed to the spirit of his teaching. And the tradition that introduced into the life of Jesus such an absurd and portentous story as that of the Gadarene miracle, was sure to attribute many manifestations of power over diabolic agency to one who was regarded as the Messiah; and to exaggerate into miracle anything in the facts which could suggest such an idea—*e.g.* any power beyond common experience, shown by Jesus to control or soothe the spirits of those mentally diseased. We must remember, also, that a great prophet or teacher, as he has to breathe the atmosphere and speak in the language of his own time, may often be obliged to leave untouched subsidiary conceptions, which are irreconcilable with the great principle he has to teach. Nay, he may scarcely direct his thought to them at all, or realise how they are inconsistent with his own ideas. Such passages as Mark ix. 29, Luke x. 18, show how the idea of a temporary power of evil might be reconciled with what we have called the optimism of Jesus, on the principle,—afterwards developed by St. Paul,—that evil exists in order to be overcome and in order to develop the power of good by the very process of overcoming it. In any case, it may be said that the idea of an absolute power of evil, which does not exist with a view to a greater good, is essentially opposed to the whole spirit of the teaching of Jesus, and must ultimately be set aside by the development of his thought, even if it was included in traditional conceptions of the time which he was unable to repudiate.

LECTURE FIFTH.

THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF CHRISTIANITY AS CONTRASTED WITH JUDAISM.

Christianity as the Realisation of the Idea of Religion—The Negative Character of Judaism and the Positive Character of Christianity as regards: (1) *The Relation of God to Nature;* (2) *The Relation of God to Man, especially as manifesting itself in the Social life of Man;* (3) *The Nature of the Service of God by Man—Different Aspects of Christianity as presented in the New Testament—Jesus and St. Paul—General Characteristics of the Life and Words of Jesus.*

In the last lecture I pointed out that the religion of Christ arises in relation to a state of religious thought in which the opposition between the real and the ideal had been stretched almost to the point of dualism; in which, indeed, heaven and earth were set against each other, and the latter was regarded as, at least for a time, abandoned to the power of evil. Beelzebub was 'the prince of this world,' and the ills of soul and body which afflict humanity were the marks of his hold upon it. Hence the anticipation of the future triumph of good on earth could take

only what we may call an apocalyptic form. The expected and prophesied deliverance could only be one in which, by a miraculous act of omnipotence, the whole system of things on earth should be changed, and the powers of this world suddenly subdued under the feet of a Messiah sent out from God. Jesus had at once to disappoint and to fulfil such prophecies. He had to substitute faith in a present for the hope of a future deliverance, to teach men to see God already working within and without them, and so to take away the need for an external sign in the clouds of heaven, such as the Jews expected and demanded from him. He had to conquer evil, and teach that it was to be conquered, not by might, nor by power, but by the spiritual weapons of love, insight, and self-sacrifice. And, while he recognised to the full all the evils which had led to the pessimistic view of life which prevailed in his time, he had yet to discover and reveal a principle of good which was working beneath these evils in order to overcome them. He had, in short, to penetrate to "the soul of goodness in things evil," and so to draw his faith in good from a spring deeper than the lowest sources of despair. He had to receive the full shock of suffering and sin, and to plant the hopes of humanity where they should not be overthrown by either.

Now, if we ask what is the ultimate basis of this

solution of the religious difficulty—of this optimism drawn as it were from the very depths of pessimism—which is characteristic of Christianity, the answer is, that in Christianity religion has risen to its own true form: it, at last, is the consciousness of that spiritual principle which manifests itself in *both* subject and object alike, and which realises its unity with itself through all their difference. God is now conceived not, as in all objective religions, as a merely natural power, or as the unity of all natural powers: nor again is He conceived, as in subjective religion, as a spiritual Being outside of nature and dominating over it. He is conceived as manifesting Himself alike in the whole process of nature and in the process of spirit as it rises above nature. In other words, God is to Christianity a Spirit, as in subjective religion; but He does not exclude nature, nor is He external to it, except in the sense that He is not limited to it. He is immanent in nature, as in objective religion, but He also transcends it, and makes it a means to the higher life of spirit. That this is actually the main purport and tendency of the Christian religion will become clear if we consider (1) how Christianity arises out of the highest subjective religion of the Jews; (2) how this process of development reaches its culmination and its turning point in Jesus; and (3) how starting from the life and words of Jesus, it makes the beginning

of a new development that has been advancing ever since.

On the first of these points a good deal has been already said. The development of Judaism gradually freed the idea of God from the national limitations which had been attached to it in the early history of Israel. Thus, it tended to banish not only the conception of a natural relationship between the God and His worshippers—a conception common to all objective religions, but which had already disappeared even in our earliest records of Hebrew religion—but also the conception, still present in the Old Testament scriptures, of the mere arbitrary choice of one nation to a privilege from which the others are excluded. And, *pari passu* with this universalising of the idea of God, there went also a growing consciousness of the moral character of the service due to him. The God of the whole earth, who was the universal source of justice among men, could not be propitiated by a cultus of external ceremony, but only by clean hands and a pure heart; and His service could not be separated from the service of man. Thus the prophetic message came to be one in which the universal was throughout opposed to the particular; the God of the universe to a merely national divinity; the claim to divine protection based on justice and mercy, to a claim based on membership

in a particular nation and observance of its national customs; and, finally, the service of the heart to the outward service of ritual and sacrifice. Thus, by a process which was closely analogous to the development of the Stoical philosophy in Greece, the religion of the prophets tended to become at once universal and individual, free from national limits or peculiarities, and centred in the inner life of the subject.

But, while this is true, it is to be observed that the emancipation thus won from the national, the particular, and the external, was still expressed *negatively*, and was, therefore, embarrassed by its relation to that which was opposed or denied. *Not* the nation but mankind, *not* ritual but morality, *not* the letter but the spirit, is the universal message of prophecy. But the new principle does not reveal itself *except* in opposition; that is, in relation to that to which it is opposed. And we may even say that the things protested against by the Jewish religion are necessary to it, since it is only in denying and protesting against them that that religion reaches a higher point of view. Hence, the same nation whose sacred books proclaim that it exists ultimately for the blessing of the whole earth, remained actually shut up in an exclusive and bitter national pride, which caused it to be suspected of *odium humani generis*. The same people, from whose prophets had proceeded the fiercest denuncia-

tions of a mere outward ritual, and the strongest assertions that the God of righteousness despises all priestly rites, and cares for nothing but purity of heart, develops in the later stage of its history a legalism and formalism which entangle all life in a network of meaningless prescriptions. The antithesis of the law and the prophets, of the priestly sacrifices of the blood of bulls and goats and the true sacrifice of a broken and contrite spirit, runs through the whole history of the Jewish nationality from beginning to end. And, strange to say, the two opposites seem to be essentially bound together; so that, to use the words of St Paul in a slightly different sense, it is only 'through the law' that the Jew 'becomes dead to the law.' The law must exist as his starting point, and it is in opposition to it and yet by means of it, that he rises to a spiritual religion. The Pharisaic legalism keeps the peculiar people of God separate from the world, and serves as a protective husk, within which the treasure of spiritual religion is preserved till the fulness of the times is come.

It appears, then, that what we have in the history of Israel is a perpetual struggle of the subjective against the objective type of religion. It is a struggle which cannot end in a complete victory, because it is impossible that the subject should be torn away from the object without ceasing to

exist; yet it is a struggle which must necessarily continue so long as no way has been discovered of exalting the spiritual except at the expense of the natural. Hence, each of the distinctive ideas of Israel—the idea of the spirituality of God, the idea of His universal relation to men, and the idea of His service as consisting in the practice of justice and mercy—is developed by means of a contrast, *against* the idea of God as a natural power or powers, *against* the idea of His relation to man as mediated by a covenant with a special race, and *against* the idea of His service as consisting in the observance of a special ritual and law. In short, the value of this religion lay in its process, and not in the end to which that process seemed to point; in the struggle of the principle of subjective with the principle of objective religion, and not in the victory of the former over the latter—a victory which would have been fatal to subjective religion itself. For every one of these principles is only a partial truth. The assertion of the spirituality of God is true, as a protest against nature-worship; or, in other words, against the subordination of the spirit to, or its identification with, nature; but it is false, if taken as a denial of the immanence of God *in* nature. The assertion of God's universal relation to all men and to all nations is true, as against the conception of Him

as the head, whether by natural relationship or by arbitrary choice, of a particular race; but it is false if it be taken as involving that He is a God who does *not* manifest Himself in the concrete social life of humanity, or bind men together as the members of one society. The assertion that the only divine service is the inner worship of the heart, is true as against the substitution of outward ritual and observance for morality; but it is false, if it be taken as equivalent to a denial that the world and our fellowmen mediate between us and God, or that a spiritual religion needs to express itself in any outward form.

Now, in all these points, Christianity may be said to fulfil, or carry to its highest realisation, the principle of Judaism, rather than to destroy it; yet, in a sense, in fulfilling it, it necessarily destroys it. For it does away with the absoluteness of that antithesis between the spiritual and the natural, the subjective and the objective, on which the purity and elevation of the religion of Israel was based. Or, rather, we might express it by saying that Christianity carries out the subjective movement of Jewish religion to the extreme point, and overcomes the onesided subjectivity of that religion just by doing so. Thus the spirituality of God is no longer conceived negatively as separating Him from the things He has made, but positively as revealing

itself in the life of nature, while making it the basis of the higher life of man. God, indeed, is no longer supposed to be specially manifested in any one natural object, nor even in the natural world as a whole, if the natural be severed from the spiritual. But it is essential to the new point of view that the natural should *not* be severed from the spiritual, but rather that the Divine Spirit should be regarded as revealing itself in the upward process of nature to humanity, as well as in the farther process whereby human life rises toward the attainment of its highest ideal. Jesus, therefore, "views the external world with free and friendly eyes,"[1] and in his parables he uses it as a rich storehouse from which symbols might be drawn to express the relations of the spiritual life. Nay, he even finds "spiritual law in the natural world." He treats what has been usually regarded as the impartial indifference of nature as the manifestation of the all-embracing love of a God, who "sendeth His rain upon the just and the unjust" alike; and he takes the death and revival of the 'corn of wheat' as the expression of the great moral law of self-realisation through self-sacrifice. We may, therefore, fairly say that Jesus altogether sets aside the old Jewish conception of the outward world as an external instrument called into existence to fulfil the divine designs,

[1] Bosanquet, *History of Aesthetic*, 128.

and regards the natural as in perfect continuity with the spiritual life. St. Paul merely gives us the *rationale* of this way of thinking, when he declares that nature is but a stage in the process of the divine self-revelation—a stage which, indeed, is in itself imperfect and finite, but which points forward to the higher life of man as its complement and completion. "The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God," for the fuller revelation of the divine in man. Hence, nature cannot come to its rights, cannot show its highest meaning, until, in the life of man, it becomes the servant of a higher design. "The creation is made subject to transitoriness, not by its own fault, but by reason of him who has subjected it," *i.e.* by reason of the imperfection and the fall of man; but it also, in the apostle's view, is ultimately to share "in the freedom of the glory of the sons of God." "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in sympathy with us until now." Nature waits for the revelation of spirit in man, and man also waits and longs for a fuller revelation of the spiritual principle in himself. "And not only the creation, but we also who already possess the first-fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting to be put in full possession of our rights as sons of God, by the redemption of

the body," *i.e.* waiting and longing for that full manifestation of the new principle, which shall not merely transform the inward disposition of our souls, but also reconstitute our outward physical life in harmony therewith, substituting a spiritual for a natural body.[1] In this way St. Paul is urged by the reconciling principle of Christianity to bring nature and man together. And he represents their whole existence as connected in one process, which has revealed in the past, is revealing in the present, and will reveal still more in the future, the one spiritual life which flows out from God to the creation, and which flows back to Him again through man—the highest of all the creatures. Thus St. Paul combines the idea of the *spirituality* of God, which was characteristic of monotheism, with the idea of the *immanence* of God, which was characteristic of pantheism, uniting both in one conception by the aid of the idea of evolution.

Again, while Jewish prophecy asserted, or, at least, suggested the universality of God's relation to men, it asserted it only, or mainly, in connexion with the idea of a demand of God for an inward self-surrender of the individual to the divine law, and in opposition to the racial privilege of the sons of Abraham. Israel was not to claim salvation as its birth-right, but only in virtue of its obedience to

[1] Rom. viii. 19-23; 1 Cor. xv. 44 *seq.*

the divine law of righteousness and charity, and, therefore, only on a spiritual ground which could, and must, be extended to all men. But this truth, while it carried those who admitted it beyond the national point of view, was nevertheless always apprehended in relation to it; and, therefore, it never got farther than the prophecy, that through Israel 'all nations of the earth should be blessed.' In this respect it was Christianity that first fairly cut asunder the connexion of the spiritual principle with its natural root, and definitely asserted that, *because* the relation of God to man was spiritual, it was an equal relation to all men. It was the necessary consequence of this that social life should be reconstituted in a higher form on the basis of religion. Christianity, indeed, inherited from Judaism that opposition of Church and State, which had been the result of the political overthrow of Judah, and of the subject state of the Jews ever after their return from exile. And the early growth of the Christian Church as a separate society within the Roman empire, even exaggerated the opposition between the spiritual and the secular powers. But while the later Jewish religion by its exaltation of the subjective as against the objective, distinctly tended to originate and confirm this division, Christianity was in principle hostile to such a practical dualism, and must, in the long run, overcome it.

Its last word could not be the denial of the bond of nationality as a sufficient ethical expression of the religious principle. It inevitably had to advance to the positive assertion, that the unity of man with God finds its adequate manifestation only in a unity of all men with each other,—a unity to which both individual and national differences are subordinated. When St. Paul drew the picture of an organic society, in which all diversities of gifts should be subservient to one spiritual life, he was not showing what the Church might be as apart from the State. Rather he was showing that Christianity is wide enough to overcome all the divisions of the outward life of mankind, whether natural or spiritual, and to bind them together as members of one great community. The idea of an organic unity of humanity, which should be manifested not only in an abstract cosmopolitanism, but in the concrete reality of an actual community both of the inward and the outward life—*i.e.* the idea of a future World-State—was from the first closely bound up with the Christian religion, though in earlier times it took on the aspect of an immediate Messianic hope, and in the Middle Ages it was obscured by the increasing dualistic tendencies of the times. But this point must be reserved for fuller discussion in another lecture.

The last point of difference of the Christian from

the Jewish religion lies in its reconciliation of religion with morality; or, in other words, in its identification of the cultus in which religion expresses itself, with the service of man. Such an identification had no doubt been suggested by the prophets, who declared that the true fast was *not* the outward humiliation of sackcloth and ashes, but "to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free"; and said that the true sacrifice was *not* the outward offering of bullocks on the altar, but the willing and joyful submission of the soul to the divine law of love. But, as we have seen, this '*not*' of the prophets translated itself in practice into a "not merely," and it was therefore powerless to create a new order of social life, though it might do something to put a new spirit into the old order. The temple service might be despised, or regarded as insufficient, but it still furnished the basis from which the Jew's aspirations after something higher had to start, and to which they always returned. But Christianity absolutely rejected all mechanical observance of external rules detached from the spirit of life. Ritual ceased to be the service of God, so soon as that service was separated from the idea of obedience to a law externally given, and was conceived as the necessary outward expression of a divine principle which united men to each other

as members of one divine-human society. In other words, the true service of God lay henceforth in those works of mercy and justice which were needful to make human society into a manifestation of divine love.

To put the same thought in a slightly different way. For the Jew, the only deliverance from the externality of ritual lay in the subjective spirit of piety, which lifted the individual in his inner life above the outward service of the temple. And this, no doubt, led to a comparatively higher estimate of the moral as contrasted with the ceremonial elements of the law. But these two elements could not be distinctly separated from each other, so long as that which is universal was mingled and confused with that which is national. Short of this, there might be a certain infusion of the new spirit into the old forms of life; but it was not strong enough to destroy these forms and to construct others more adequate to itself. Rather, it caused the pious soul to draw back upon itself, and to seek satisfaction for its spiritual needs in an inner worship of God which had no outward expression whatever. But, with Christianity came the idea that this inner ideal is outwardly realisable; that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, and capable of being set up on earth; nay, that it is already so set up. For, although no particular

state or its institutions could furnish an adequate sphere for the expression of the spiritual principle, yet it was not condemned to remain hid within the soul. It could now manifest itself in an 'enthusiasm of humanity,' in an effort after the reconstitution of the social life of mankind on the basis of their essential unity with each other and with God. In this way the recoil of the later religion of the Jews from the State, and even from the Church which they had set in its place, was carried to the point at which it broke off all connexion with both,—at least in the limited national form they had hitherto taken. But, at the same time, the connexion of the inner life with the outer, of religion with the social service of man, was re-established on a new basis. Just as the Stoic, isolating himself from all the life of the family and State, found in the isolated self upon which he withdrew the principle of a cosmopolitan society, and thus rose to a new *positive* conception of the relations of men to men, which could take the place of the old relations of kinsmen or fellow-citizens; so it was here. The subjective tendency, which carried the prophets and psalmists of Israel beyond the morality of national patriotism, and beyond the ecclesiastical legalism which arose after the exile, could attain complete freedom from these limits only when it changed into a consciousness

of the solidarity of all men as spiritual beings, who are essentially related to each other through their common relation to one Father in heaven.

What has been said may be sufficient to indicate the way in which the Jewish spirit of subjective piety reached its culmination in Christianity, and, just because it did so, rose altogether above a merely subjective type of religion. We have thus seen that Christianity was at once an end and a new beginning—the end of the religion of subjectivity, the beginning of what *par excellence* we may call the *religion of spirit.* But, so far, we have spoken of Christianity in general, without special reference to its founder, and especially without asking how much was directly due to that founder, and how much was developed out of his words and deeds by St. Paul or other of his immediate or remote successors. Nor is it within the limits of our subject to enter minutely into such questions, except so far as is required to illustrate the development of religious thought. At the same time, even for this purpose, it is necessary to say a few words of the germinal idea of Christianity as expressed in the life and words of Jesus; in order to show that the subsequent development is a legitimate one, and that what now appears in it is really to be found in germ there.

Now, it is not to be concealed that there are

many differences in the aspects of truth presented to us within the New Testament: *e.g.* between the apocalyptic anticipations of the Revelations and the idealistic spiritualism of the Gospel of St. John; or, again, between the direct aphoristic utterances of Jesus as they are presented to us in the Synoptic Gospels, and the theorising and generalising spirit of the epistles of St. Paul, who is not content till he has reached a philosophy of history, and set Christianity in its due place in the progress of humanity both in relation to Judaism, and also, in some measure, to other religious systems. In relation to the latter of these differences the doubt has sometimes been expressed, *on the one hand*, whether St. Paul did not make more out of the simple moral teaching of the Gospels than was really to be found in it; and, *on the other hand*, whether he did not corrupt by theory the pure and practical spirit of Christ's teaching, and confine the fresh current of the new inspiring idea within the narrower channels of a metaphysical system of theology. These opposite views have not seldom been advocated in the writings of those who have most freely criticised the "Origins" of Christianity. Thus, Comte in France and Von Hartmann in Germany speak of St. Paul as the real founder of Christianity; while, on the other side, Renan and many others have maintained that, if St. Paul made

Christianity more powerful for a time by turning it into a dogmatic system, he at the same time sophisticated and even perverted the simplicity of its primary principles, and obscured their essential truth by entangling them in the forms of a philosophy which only represented a passing phase of human thought. In such a controversy, men will be disposed to take sides according to their native tendency to theorise life, or to dislike theorising it; and plausible grounds cannot be wanting to support either view. For, in one sense, theory is always less than life, while in another it is more than life. By generalising, we liberate the truth from the accidents of its temporary embodiment; we universalise what at first was particular, and thus we make it capable of entering into new combinations and influencing those whom in its first expression it could not have reached at all. On the other hand, while theory thus universalises and liberates the truth, it is also liable in some degree to deprive it of that vivid local colour, that close relation to life, that fresh actuality and fertility of suggestion, which belongs to the intuitive utterances of immediate experience. Abstractions have their narrowness as well as perceptions; and, in their hard antitheses, they are apt at once to simplify and to impoverish the complex relations of life. Hence, if there is a danger that great principles should remain hidden

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and ineffective, or that, after having emerged for a time as the concrete lessons of life, they should again pass out of sight and be lost, unless they are fixed once for all in the clearness and definiteness of abstract thought; there is undoubtedly also a danger that by being torn from the soil in which they first sprung up, they may lose their living and life-giving power. In this way, a dead and barren system of doctrine may take the place of the religious life it would explain; a creed grasped by the understanding may substitute itself for that inspiring faith, which is the identification of the very self of him who holds a truth with the truth he holds. The truest theory is apt to become a mere word, an empty abstraction, to him who does not see it in its connexion with, its emergence out of, the facts it interprets; who does not take it, so to speak, as a stage in the way from a narrower to a wider life. Yet, on the other hand, a fact or even an intuition, that is not idealised by imagination and generalised by reflexion, must remain, or soon become, barren and unfruitful.

Looking at it in this way, we can see beyond the prejudices of individuals for or against speculative reflexion; we can recognise the important position of such reflexion as a factor in the process of development, without attributing to it a creative function that does not belong to it. Thus it is

easy to see that the clearness with which St. Paul realised the central lesson of the cross, the force and we might even say the violence of abstraction with which he tore it away from its Jewish setting, and expressed it in its universal meaning, were necessary to prevent Christianity from sinking into a Jewish sect, such as it actually became for a time in the Church of Jerusalem. But, on the other hand, what would have become of the healing virtue of Christianity, what of its power upon the general heart of man, without the subtle personal charm of the forgiveness of Jesus and his invasive charity for all the ills that afflict the flesh or the spirit of man; without the direct appeal of his words of comfort to the fallen, his denunciation of the oppressor, his proclamation of peace out of the depths of human sorrow, and his prophecy of good in the face of the most violent outburst of evil? What would have been the result if, in place of all this, we had only St. Paul's inspiring but abstract description of the conflict of law and grace; or his idealisation of Jesus, as the Christ who came from God to endure the sufferings of death and to conquer death for man? When we ask this question we are forced to recognise that such an abstract theory of Christianity, without the living image of Jesus, would soon have lost all its force and meaning. It is in fact just as the first theoretical or reflective explanation of the life of Jesus

that the Pauline doctrine has its value for us; and, important as it is, it must be recognised that the explanation has its weak side, and that it is far from finally exhausting the meaning of the facts which it seeks to explain. Those who maintain that St. Paul in some degree obscured the lesson of the Gospel—even while he universalised it, and so carried it beyond the limitations of its earliest form—have undoubtedly much to say for themselves, if only they are ready to admit that such a partial obscuration of the completeness of the original truth was necessary to its development. The germ is in a sense more complete, contains implicitly a fuller life than any of the dividing shoots and branches that spring from it, or indeed than all of them put together; but the differentiation shown in them is a necessary stage of growth, through which the seed must pass if it is ever to return to itself in the multiplied life of the fruit. If we might venture to paraphrase the passage in the Gospel, in which Jesus compares himself to John the Baptist, we should express it thus: Jesus Christ came uttering the pregnant words of wisdom in the closest union of thought and life, and they say, he is merely a pious Jew of more than usual purity and depth of character: Paul came idealising and generalising the facts of Christ's life and death, and they say, he is only a philosopher who reduces life to

a theory, if not a sophist who disguises it in high sounding abstractions. But "wisdom is justified of her children." Action and thought, intuition and reflexion, are not enemies, though they are often opposed. They are both the necessary stages in the development of one spiritual life; and that life needs them both for its advance to a fuller consciousness of itself and of the divine unity which is at once its source and its goal.

Now, if for the moment we confine ourselves entirely to the Synoptic Gospels, and if, neglecting all minor differences of spirit between them, we try to catch the general lineaments of the personality they depict, what is the distinctive peculiarity, the main note of individuality, the characteristic attitude of thought and will that is there set before us? Setting aside for the time all special theological ideas, all conceptions that would lift the founder of Christianity above the ordinary conditions of human life, we may fairly ask: What is the general impression he makes upon us, as seen through the varied lights and shadows of these three narratives? what is the general spirit and purport of the teaching they ascribed to him. I have already indicated that it seems to me to be a confidence in God —as manifested in nature and in man—which is so firm and powerful that it faces the utmost manifestation of evil with a certitude of victory. Nor is this

certitude the result of anything like what we usually call religious enthusiasm. To no one could we more truly apply the text that the "spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets"; that, in other words, the divine utterance comes forth without disturbing the balance of the humanity through which it comes. In this respect there is a marked difference between Jesus and St. Paul. In the writings of St. Paul, as in those of the old prophets of Israel, the stream of inspiration pours itself forth with a convulsive energy of speech, which shows that he is possessed by his thought rather than possesses it; and he seems almost to lose sight of the ordinary struggle of man with the conditions of mortality, in his vision of a world-conflict between the powers of good and the powers of evil, the 'principalities and powers' of the spiritual world. With this we have to contrast that simple realisation of the facts of life and death, of the sorrow and the sin of man, which is as characteristic of the Jesus of the Gospels as the steadfast certainty that looks beyond both to an all-encompassing power of good. If we can trace any progress in the teaching of Jesus as it is recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, it is only that, with the increasing pressure of the conflict, and the growing consciousness of the evil with which he has to contend, there comes a deepening sense of the *necessity* of such conflict with evil, and of all the suffering it brings with it, to the highest

triumph of good. This is nowhere more clearly expressed than in the passage in which, as we gather from the context, Jesus first admitted to his disciples that he was—though not in the sense they supposed—the Messiah, the Prophet who was to end prophecy and fulfil the prophetic hopes of Israel. For he has no sooner made this admission than he immediately begins to teach them that it is not through outward triumph, but through suffering and death, that the true Christ and his followers can work out deliverance for mankind; and that he who would save his life and the life of others must begin by losing it.[1] We may, therefore, say that the basis of the thought of Jesus is the consciousness that good is omnipotent: that what the soul of man recognises as the highest ideal is at the same time the deepest reality of the world; and that man is not merely the creature but the son of God. This Sonship Jesus, as the Messiah, claims for himself that he may claim it for man. And on this basis he immediately proceeds to correct the Jewish idea of Messiahship, by purging it of the ingredient of outward conquest and sovereignty, by denying that the true evidences of it are miraculous signs from heaven; and also to point out the true conditions of the triumph of good in the world,

[1] Matt. xvi. 17, 21, 25; Mark viii. 29, 31, 34; Luke ix. 20, 22, 23.

as a power whose first outward manifestation is not in strength but in weakness, not in success but in sacrifice and death. It is because of these two things: his unshaken faith in the omnipotence of good, and his clear comprehension of the conditions through which it shows its power in this world—not overpowering evil, so to speak, by main force, but disarming it by enduring its utmost hostility—that the life and words of Jesus have had such power over the spiritual life of man. Hence, however otherwise we may conceive it, this life must remain to us the typical expression of religious feeling; for it brings the consciousness of finitude into a perfect unity with the consciousness of the infinite, and reconciles the monotheistic ideas of the evil that is in the world and of the transcendence of God, with the pantheistic idea of the immanence of God both in man and in nature. Jesus Christ, we may say, first discovered man's true relation to God and lived in it. From no other life, even in the imperfect records of it that have come to us, do we get the same impression of reconciliation with self and God, of conscious union with a divine Spirit, manifesting itself immediately in self-conquest and devotion to the service of humanity. No other religious teacher has kept the self-sacrifice he demanded so clear of a false asceticism. No one, living as he did, 'under the power of the world to come,' has been so

free from superstition, or has taught the irresistible and sometimes dangerous current of religious emotion to flow so exclusively in the channel of charity and justice. So long as the conscience of man retains its power, it must acknowledge,—though it may be with greatly changed forms of doctrinal interpretation,—that the divine and the human were brought together in one, whose consciousness of unity with God so directly passed into a consciousness of unity with man.

LECTURE SIXTH.

THE RELIGION OF JESUS.

The Reconciliation of Man with God—Difference of the Christian from the Pantheistic Reconciliation—"Die to Live"—Negative and Positive Aspect of this Idea—How far it was a New Idea—Anticipations of it—Theoretical and Practical Consequences of it—How it contrasts with the Despairing Subjective Views of later Judaism—The Purification of the Jewish Messianic Ideas by Jesus—The Tragic Crisis which was its consequence—The Idea of Development in the Teaching of Jesus.

In the last lecture I endeavoured to show that Christianity at once realised and transcended, fulfilled and abolished the religion of Israel. For it carried the subjective tendency of that religion to the point where the subject frees itself from all relation to an objectivity which is external to itself, and thereby becomes capable of recognising an objectivity which is not external. Withdrawing from the natural as opposed to the spiritual, the subject comes for the first time to understand that the natural in its ultimate reality is itself spiritual. Recoiling from the life of the state as worldly and

evil, man awakes to the idea of a kingdom of heaven, which is to be set up, nay, which is already set up, on earth. At the same time, all the national limitations under which the universal meaning of religion was hidden are abolished; all the outward forms under which the spiritual was half concealed and half revealed, are cast aside. God becomes the God of all men and nations, the God who is revealed in nature and history alike; and the whole process of finite existence is viewed as one connected evolution, in which God manifests Himself in and to His creatures, that 'in the fulness of time He may reconcile all things to Himself.' The spiritual idea of God which, in the Jewish monotheism, had been reached by the harsh breach of His connexion with nature and with man, is retained; but in place of the purely *negative* elevation of the Divine Subject above all objects in the finite world, we have the positive idea of God as a spiritual principle manifested in the organic unity of that world with all its differences and antagonisms, and in the process of evolution, whereby all these differences and antagonisms are reconciled and overcome.

That such ideas lay directly in the line of the development of Christianity, and that they began to show their power very early in its history, we do not need to look farther than the New Testament

to see. It is, however, not at once easy to show in the teaching and life of Jesus the germinal principle out of which they arise, or to discover the line of filiation between it and later developments. The Christian idea is so complex and fertile that it admits into its movement the most diverse elements; and it cannot, therefore, be developed except by antagonism and controversy. For no complete reconciliation between opposing aspects of truth can ever be made, unless each of them is drawn out to its utmost consequences, and set in clear antithesis to the others. Hence the history of Christianity renews within itself all the conflicts of earlier religions; and it seems at first almost as difficult to detect any dominant unity in it as in the general history of religion itself. Even in the New Testament, as I pointed out in the last lecture, we are met by the great contrast between that generalised and idealised view of the relations of God and man—that philosophy of religion, as we may almost call it—which is expounded in the Epistles of St. Paul, and the direct aphoristic and parabolic lessons embodied in the words of Jesus, and bound up in close connexion with the incidents of his human life and death. In some degree, indeed, this contrast is softened for us by the fact that these records were not written for a considerable time after the events they narrate;

and that, therefore, they have been considerably modified by the refracting influence of the ideas of a later period. Those who wrote the account of the actions and words of Jesus were looking back upon the beginning of his ministry in the light of its end; and they could hardly, even if they belonged to his earlier disciples, recall the memory of a period when they had not known him as the Messiah, or even as one greater than the Jewish Messiah. Still, when we pass, say, from the Sermon on the Mount to the Epistle to the Romans we are undoubtedly sensible that we have come into a different intellectual atmosphere; and we do not find it altogether easy to draw any lines of connexion between things that seem to lie so far apart. Now, it is not, of course, my intention to examine the details of this contrast, which has been elucidated by many able writers; but it is necessary in following out the idea of religious evolution, which it has been the purpose of these lectures to illustrate, that I should endeavour to explain a little more fully what I have called the germinal idea of Christianity, and show how it is related to those later forms of thought and life which have arisen out of it.

In the first place, then, the teaching of Jesus contrasts with that of the greatest Jewish prophets, and even with that of his immediate predecessor,

John the Baptist, in so far as it is a preaching of *reconciliation* with God, and that, not in the future, but immediately in the present; and not as something to be added from without to human life, but on the basis of an original unity. God is represented, not in a passing figure, but in the title which is supposed to express His essential nature as the "Father" of men; and it is declared that the time has come for Him to be known *as* their Father. The declaration made in the beginning of the ministry of Jesus that "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of heaven is at hand," passes with scarce a break into the announcement that "The kingdom of God is among you"; and the importance of this announcement is asserted to be such that it makes, so to speak, a difference *in kind* between the greatest saints and prophets who lived under the previous reign of division, and the "least in the kingdom of heaven." The highest ideal is brought close to men and declared to be within their reach: they are called on to be "perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect." The sense of alienation and distance from God, which had grown upon the pious in Israel just in proportion as they had learned to look upon Him as no mere national divinity, but as a God of justice who would punish Israel for its sin as certainly as Edom or Moab, is declared to be no longer in place; and the typical form of Christian

prayer points to the abolition of the contrast between this world and the next which through all the history of the Jews had continually been growing wider: "As in heaven, so on earth." The sense of the division of man from God, as a finite being from the infinite, as weak and sinful from the omnipotent goodness, is not indeed lost; but it can no longer overpower the consciousness of oneness. The terms 'Son' and 'Father' at once state the opposition and mark its limit. They show that it is not an absolute opposition, but one which presupposes an indestructible principle of unity, that can and must become a principle of reconciliation. Jesus, as the 'Son of Man,'—to use the characteristic title which he gives to himself,—is conscious that man is capable of being at one with God; nay, that this is the sole attitude of consciousness in which man can be at one with himself. And what Jesus felt in himself, he could call upon all men to share, not as one who summoned them to a task alien to their natures, or laid upon them a yoke, a foreign yoke, like the legal service of the Pharisees, but as one who invited them to be what they really are. For he who is at war with God and goodness is regarded as at war with himself and alienated from himself; and for man to be reconciled to God is to come to himself, and to give up the endless and fruitless struggle with the very principle of his own life. "Come unto me, ye that

labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."[1]

Such an idea of union with the divine and rest in the divine, as the real ground of all our finite life, was not a new thing in the world; but it was new in the form which was now given to it. It was not new; for it had been the very essence of the Indian pantheism. The pantheist also could say, "Acquaint yourself with God, and be at peace." Rise above your own finitude and the finitude of things around you. Seek not the objects which perish with the using. Regard them, and even your own finite existence, as the unrealities which they are when seen *sub specie æternitatis,* and turn your eyes and your wishes from their illusions. Abstract from that which exists only in the dream of finitude, and lose your shadowy joys and sorrows in the contemplation of the Infinite Being. Learn the lesson of Spinoza, that "all happiness and unhappiness depends upon the nature of the object on which we fix our affections. For, except on account of that which is the object of love, no contentions can arise; no sorrow, if it perishes; no envy, if it is possessed by another; no fear, no hatred,

[1] Matthew xi. 28, 30.

and, in short, no disturbance of mind—all which feelings are continually stirred up within us by the love of those things which perish, such as wealth, honour, and pleasure. But *love to that which is eternal and infinite feeds the soul with unmingled joy, a joy untainted with any sorrow.* This, therefore, we ought to desire and seek after with all our powers." [1]

This kind of pantheism, however, reaches the unity of the finite with the infinite solely by *denying* the reality of the former. It reconciles man with God simply by the negation of all that makes him man. But such a negative deliverance is, as we have already seen, no real emancipation If it brings rest to the weary, it is but the rest of the grave. Nay, as the Buddhist recognised, with the absolute negation of the finite, the infinite also, which is known only in relation to it, is deprived of all meaning. Its God ceases to be a living God, just because He has absorbed all life into Himself.

It is not such a God, or such a union with God, which Jesus proclaims as the refuge of man from his own finitude and sin. God is to him a living God, who, for that very reason, is the 'God not of the dead but of the living.' If he bids men abstract

[1] *De Intellectus Emendatione*, i. 10. "*Sed amor erga rem aeternam et infinitam sola laetitia pascit animum, ipsaque omnis tristitiae est expers.*"

from the finite, it is not that they may lose themselves in the infinite, but that by losing they may truly find themselves. If he bids them to give up everything to God, if he calls upon them to renounce house and lands, father and mother, wife and child for himself, it is not in the ascetic spirit that denies any value to the gifts of fortune and the ties of natural affection, but only in the sense of the saying: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."[1] And in the words, which more than any others seem to sum up his theory of life, he declares that the renunciation of self, and of every finite good which is attached to the life of the self, is demanded, not in order to lift man above the loss and decay of all that is finite, by renouncing it once for all as hollow and illusive, but in order that by the sacrifice of His *immediate* life a fuller life may be attained. If "he that saveth his life shall lose it," it is also declared that "he that loseth his life shall save it." The death to self which he requires is thus only the death of the seed—the loss of the immediate form of its finitude—that the principle of its life may have opportunity to manifest itself in a form that is more adequate. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth

[1] Matthew vi. 33.

forth much fruit."[1] It is this idea that gives unity and consistency to the words of Christ through all the antithesis, and even apparent contradiction which is to be found in them. Without it, we cannot apprehend that teaching as a whole, or see its true originality; for that originality lies not in any single unprecedented word or thought, but just in the fact that all special aspects of man's life are brought under this one principle, and that the principle itself is carried out with a resolute consistency which faces all difficulties, and even turns them into new illustrations of its truth. I hesitate here to introduce the names of philosophic schools, for they are apt to bring with them confusing associations: otherwise I should be inclined to say that Jesus was the most consistent of all idealists,—one who worked out his idealism not in abstract theory, but by the unflinching application of a spiritual measure alike to the simplest and to the most mysterious facts of our existence. No one ever lived and died in more constant defiance of the fainthearted maxim, that "that which is true in theory is false in practice," or that there are things which are 'too good to be true.' Even Plato tells us that it is "in the nature of things that practice should fall short of theory," and flinches from recommending the realisation of his ideal state. But Jesus not only treats

[1] John xii. 24.

the ideal or universal as the divine, and so as the *highest* reality; he maintains that it can and must be realised by and in man in this life; and further, that it must be realised, not by the agency of an external miraculous force compelling man against his will, but by the penetrative attraction of a love that draws forth the hidden energies of his nature, and so brings him back from his wanderings to the divine principle of his own life.

This will become clearer, if we follow out a little farther the meaning of the Christian antithesis, "Die to live." The first point involved in it is the absolute surrender of self—and with it of every finite good, every outward advantage and even every narrower relation of human affection—to God, the God who is revealed by Jesus as the Father of spirits. No pantheist, no ascetic ever expressed the demand for the sacrifice of the finite life in broader or more uncompromising terms. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."[1] "Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead."[2] Nothing but what we might even call a reckless abandonment of self, which never counts the cost or keeps anything back, is regarded as sufficient, if the first step is to be made in the new life. And, what is

[1] Luke xiv. 26. [2] Matt. viii. 22.

further to be noted, this surrender of self is not a mere Stoical or Jewish submission to God, which buys for the servant of God a complete independence toward men. On the contrary, as God is conceived as the Father of spirits, and, therefore, as a principle of spiritual life in all men, He, with His infinite claims, is directly present to us in our fellowmen, whenever and wherever we meet with them. The beginning of man's higher life is the recognition of a universal, in reference to which all the distinctions of particulars disappear, and as springing from which they are all one; hence, in this region the very idea of right as the claim of one against another, must be set aside. Duty absorbs right, and itself becomes illimitable. In the parable of the good Samaritan, the question, "Who is my neighbour?" Who has a claim upon me? is answered by the counter-question, "Who *was* neighbour to him who fell among thieves?" "Who most fully accepted and recognised the limitless claim made upon himself by the sufferings of others?" The Christian is thus defined as one who not only with Plato counts it better to suffer than to do unjustice, but as one who, in the battle of life, begins by throwing away sword and shield; who refuses to use any of the natural weapons wherewith he is armed for the struggle for existence; who resists not evil, but "to him that smiteth on the right cheek turns the other

also." He is one who renounces antagonism and hate, and who meets evil, not with counter-evil, but with good.

In all this we see the negative side of religion—the negation of the finite in relation to the infinite, carried out as unflinchingly and consistently as it ever was carried out by any Buddhist ascetic. But there is an essential difference. With the Buddhist, the universal swallows up the particulars, and, as it is simply their negative, it disappears with them. With Jesus, whatever claim of right on the part of the finite being, as against his fellowmen or against God, is given up, is to be restored in another and higher sense. "There is no man that hath left house or brethren or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for My sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brethren and sisters and mothers and children and lands *with persecutions;* and in the world to come eternal life."[1] In other words, the charities of social life, which are renounced, shall come back multiplied in the tenderer and purer ties of Christian brotherhood; and even the outward goods of this life, though their possession may be rendered precarious by the hostility of the world, will be enjoyed in a higher way by those who have learned their deeper spiritual meaning, and to whom, as to

[1] Mark x. 29, 30.

Jesus, the natural life has become a parable of the spiritual. The Christian surrender of life and of all its immediate interests to God is not, therefore, the emptying, but the filling of it with deeper and wider interests. In breaking through the narrow walls of his individual, his domestic, his national existence, in giving away everything which he has for himself as against another, in surrendering every exclusive good, he is widening, not narrowing, his life. In ceasing to contend for his rights against others, he has made all their rights his own. The sacrifice of selfishness is the birth of the true self. The universal, which seemed to swallow up the individual life, for the first time gives it possession of the good for which it exists.

Now, in a sense, this lesson is as old as morality. For all morality is a losing of our exclusive selfhood to find it again in the wider life of a self which is not exclusive. The morality of the family consists just in this, that in ceasing to compete as individuals, in becoming instruments of the family life, these very individuals make that life their own, and so take the first step to enlarge their own existence. What they surrender comes back to them multiplied a hundredfold in the wider interests in which they are made to partake. Just because they seek not themselves, but are the instruments of an existence more comprehensive than their own,

their individual lives become extended to the compass of that which they serve. For, as a self-conscious being, man *can* never become a mere instrument of what is foreign to him; but in giving himself up to any end, it, he identifies himself with it and it with himself. Thus he becomes not an instrument but an organ of that which he serves; *i.e.* it becomes *his*, as he becomes *its*. And the same may be said of every form of man's social life. In it he always gets back multiplied what he gives away—no doubt, "*with persecutions*," for he cannot have the joys of a wider life without suffering its sorrows. But such loss is incidental to every higher gain, and he who did not suffer it would be confined to his own bare physical existence. In seeking his own interests as against others, he would empty his life of all interests whatsoever. He who cares for nothing but his own pleasure is soon bankrupt even of that.

But, while this is so, and while every step in the enlarging and elevating of man's life is in this sense a self-realisation which is purchased by self-sacrifice, this does not interfere with the essential originality of the Christian idea. For, in the first place, the mere fact is one thing and the recognition of its principle is another. That the nature of man's moral life was such, did not imply that before Christ it was *recognised* as such. Even if

it be admitted that there was any recognition of the principle at all, yet such recognition was partial, and counteracted by the equal recognition of another and opposite principle. Before Christianity, the morality of the family and the nation was not put on a universal basis, but partly, or even mainly, on the basis of the physical fact of blood-relationship; and it was limited, therefore, by such relationship. The individual grew up in a natural society, from which he never learnt to think of himself as separated; and when he came to his maturity, his own interests and rights were so closely bound up with those of the society that he could hardly, even in thought, disjoin them. Thus the process whereby his personal interests were widened and identified with those of the community was all but unconscious, while, on the other hand, he was constantly made vividly conscious of the antagonism of his own to other similar communities. His devotion to kindred and country was to him like a wider egoism, which he was constantly called upon to assert against the egoism of others. The narrow sphere of peace within which he learnt to 'die that he might live,' was for him surrounded by a wide world in which the primitive law of self-seeking prevailed. If in his eyes citizen was the natural friend of citizen, yet man was the natural enemy of man; and his life was alternately

swayed by two distinct principles of morality, by a social and an unsocial principle.[1] In such a state of things, it was impossible that the natural law of the struggle for existence should be definitely subordinated to the spiritual law of love, or that the consequences of such subordination should be recognised. Hence the Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, who first expressed the organic idea of the State, were hindered by their national prejudices from applying it to mankind in general; and even their application of it to Greek politics was hesitating and imperfect. Their ideal State was one in which only Greeks could be citizens; and even in its inner structure it was not completely organic, for it made the slaves and even the lower classes the instruments of a life in which they did not partake. On the other hand, if the later philosophic moralists of Greece, and especially the Stoics, rose to the idea of a universal principle of ethics, yet in their application of it they allowed it to remain too abstract and individualistic. If they gave to the individual a high sense of his worth and dignity as a spiritual being, and emancipated him from the limits of a merely national morality, yet they did not make the tie

[1] Cf. Mr. Herbert Spencer's view of the dual morality which necessarily prevailed in the *militant* as contrasted with the *industrial* stage of social life. *Data of Ethics*, § 93.

of humanity, which they put in its place, an effective social bond. At a still earlier time, the Jewish prophets had, as we have seen, freed their religion, and therefore their morality, from national limitations; but up to the time of Christ their ideas remained in the main negative, and therefore sterile. For the same movement of thought, by which God ceased to be to them merely the God of Israel, removed Him almost to an infinite distance from the life of man. And the Law, which was brought in to mediate, as it were, between God in His remote holiness and man in his finite existence, could not, either by its moral or its ceremonial prescriptions, supply the place of a binding social force. The Law, indeed, had relation almost entirely to the life of the individuals, and it held them together, so far as it held them together at all, merely for the purpose of a common religious worship. With Jesus, however, the principle breaks away from these limits, and shows its positive value. God is again brought near to man as the Father of all, the universal principle of social unity. All absolute exclusions of individual by individual, or of nation by nation, are abolished, and the morality of war and self-assertion is in principle rejected. There ceases to be any man or nation towards whom we are authorised to be selfish, in order to secure that the social sphere within which

we shall be unselfish. Morality is now, so to speak, made of one piece, instead of being divided between conflicting laws. For, though God has ceased to be regarded as a respecter of persons or of nations, yet He is no longer lifted high above man as an object of fear; rather, He is brought near to him as an object of love, as a God who reveals Himself in and to all men, and binds them all as brethren to each other. At this point, therefore, it becomes possible to teach the pure lesson of self-realisation through self-abnegation in all its depth and width. For it is now based not on the natural fact of kinship, but on the nature of man as a spiritual or self-conscious being, a being whose nature is rooted in God, as the universal principle of spiritual life, and who, therefore, is at war with himself so long as he is at war with any of his fellowmen.

What has been said may be already sufficient to show the agreement of Christianity even in its earliest germ, with the third and highest type of religion, which we have characterised as religion in its own proper form. For we saw that in this highest type of religion God must be represented not merely as an object or as a subject, but as, what in idea He is, the spiritual principle of unity which is above the distinction of subject and object, as it is above all other distinctions, and which is at once the presupposition and the goal, the

beginning and the end, of our finite lives. Now, if this be the true idea of God as the object of worship, and if it is in the Christian religion that it first became explicit, then we can understand the antithesis, which is peculiar to that religion, —its negation of the finite in one point of view, and its reassertion of the finite in another. The error or illusion of our ordinary consciousness is that it takes the finite as if it were the infinite, and therefore looks at the world as a collection of independent existences, without realising the unity presupposed in them all—the unity of all finite objects with each other and with the mind that knows them. And the corresponding moral defect lies in this, that finite ends and objects are sought directly as ends in themselves; or, in other words, that the realisation of the self is sought in them *as particular ends.* Now the first principle of Christian thought, in which it agrees with pantheism, is to refer the finite to the infinite, and to regard the former as nothing in itself as apart from the latter. And the first principle of Christian ethics is to condemn the love of the world, to set aside absolutely all desire for the 'treasures that moth and rust doth corrupt,' and all care and anxiety about "what we shall eat and what we shall drink, and wherewithal we shall be clothed." It thus begins by bidding us die to self and to all personal aims,

that we may live to God. All this is a natural consequence flowing from the very idea of religion. For, if the consciousness of God is the presupposition of all our consciousness both of the object and of the subject, then to treat the latter as independent of the former is to deal with abstractions as if they were realities, and to give an illusive semblance of infinity to the finite. We begin, indeed, with a consciousness of the finite, of finite objects as such, and of the self as a finite subject, as if these were *res completae*—things rounded and complete in themselves; but we come to ourselves, that is, we discover what objects truly are and what we ourselves are, only when we become conscious that they live and move and have their being in God.

But, again, the same view of religion shows us how to explain the positive turn of thought which belongs to Christianity both on its practical and on its theoretical side. For, if the consciousness of objects and also the consciousness of the subject are illusive, in so far as they are separated from the consciousness of God, yet they are the necessary expressions of that consciousness. The unity reveals itself in the diversity, and cannot be divorced from it. Hence, in the theoretical sphere, we are obliged to reinstate the finite as the manifestation of the infinite; and, in the practical sphere, we have to

recognise finite ends as elements in the infinite good, or forms in which it has to be realised. It is thus only that we can understand how the same teacher, who seems to bid us avert our eyes altogether from earth and look only to heaven, was he who turned all nature into a parable of the kingdom of God, and taught his disciples to call God Himself by a name derived from the simplest and most fundamental of natural relations. It is as if he was constantly saying, "Separate nature and man from God, and they become less than nothing, worse than non-existent: refer them both to the divine, regard nature as the garment of deity, and man as the Son of God, and they become as real as God Himself." Again, the same teacher, who calls upon us to hate father and mother and our own life also, yet bids us regard every act of service done to a human being as done to himself and to God. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." All this casting down of the finite, this utter divine recklessness and disregard of the ends of ordinary ambition, and even of the very existence of man, and, on the other hand, this raising of nature and humanity into the place of types and manifestations of divinity, become intelligible, when we consider them as the necessary consequences of the highest idea of religion; for, in accordance with

that idea, religion must humiliate man in himself that it may lift him to a consciousness of what he is in God. It must treat nature in itself as an illusive semblance, in order to lead us to recognise what it is as a divine revelation.

A farther light is cast upon the way in which Christianity negates the finite in itself and re-asserts it in relation to God, when we consider its connexion with Jewish monotheism. The teaching of Jesus continues and even intensifies that deep subjective spirit of piety which was the ultimate result of Jewish religion, while it rejects that individualistic isolation which had accompanied it. In some of the Psalms religion tends to become a solitary dialogue between God and the soul of the individual, a dialogue from which all the world beside is excluded; and the external worship of the temple and the synagogue, if it kept alive the idea that religion had a national aspect, yet did little to make it an effective social bond. We might even say that it showed that religion had ceased to be effective as a national bond, while it had not yet become effective as a universal bond of charity. At best it united the devout worshippers only by the consciousness of a common inner experience, and it did not make this sympathy the source of any new order of their outward lives. Rather, it made pious souls draw back from the contagion of the world,

in order to protect the purity of their inner lives in the service of what we may call the church. And with this withdrawal upon the inner life, the Jewish belief in a God of justice became darkened, till, as we have seen, it remained only as the hope of a Messiah who, by a violent revolution, should overturn the present reign of evil, and bring about the 'restitution of all things.' Now Jesus at once did justice to this dualism, and set it aside, at once fulfilled and destroyed it, by the doctrine that the very trials and sufferings, which had seemed a proof of the triumph of evil, were the necessary means to the development of the principle of good. Thus even the powers that opposed and persecuted the good were secretly its instruments, and even the malice and hatred of men were no real hindrances, but rather the opportunities required for its manifestation. For as, in warring against the good cause, men were warring against themselves, against that which was deepest in their own nature, they could use in the contest only half their strength; and their weak and divided efforts could offer no permanent resistance to the united and self-consistent force of goodness. Beelzebub *was* divided against himself, and therefore his kingdom must fall before the power of the kingdom of heaven, whose servants were at one with themselves, with the inmost tendency of the universe, and

with God. It is this simple confidence in the omnipotence of good and the impotence of evil, which breathes in such words of Jesus as these, "I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I have given you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over every power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you." This exultant faith at once changed the spirit of the self-concentrated piety of the Old Testament saints, and turned their reserve and fear of casting their pearls before swine, into an invasive charity which rejoiced in communicating itself, and believed that there was no heart so stubborn as to resist its self-communicating power. Under this new inspiration the good no longer withdrew as into a cloister, from fear of the contamination of the world; but, conscious of union with a prevailing power which ruled even the hearts of their enemies, conscious of a spring of life and love in their own souls which no sorrow could kill and no hate resist, they advanced to a conflict with all the gigantic evils of the time, and all its mightiest social and political powers, in the spirit of conquerors for whom the battle was already won. "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, *I have overcome the world.*"[1]

It is necessary that we should realise to our-

[1] John xvi. 33.

selves this absolute assurance of Jesus and of his immediate followers, in the first spring-tide of their faith, before Christianity became what it has in some measure remained ever since, a religion of the other world. As it came from the lips of its founder, Christianity was nothing less than an absolute practical idealism, which weighed all the greatness of the world in the balances of the spirit; and which, therefore, rejecting all the judgments of sense and immediate experience, all the fears and calculations of worldly prudence, regarded moral forces as practically omnipotent. To the vision of Jesus the powers of truth and love, purity and goodness, were not only immeasurably superior to all that could set itself against them—to all the deceit and malice, all the foulness and selfishness of the world—but they were capable of turning even these into the means of their own triumph. With this faith there was no doubt mingled even in the best of the early disciples, some of the old Jewish leaven, some of the Jewish hope of the external interference of a conquering Messiah; and this hope, when immediately disappointed by the crucifixion, attached itself to the idea of a shortly expected second coming of Christ in glory. The Messianic faith was the outward symbol, lying ready in the consciousness of the time; it was the prophetic form and image under which its highest aspirations

clothed themselves; it was to it, therefore, that Jesus had to appeal, and to it that he had to attach the new idea of the kingdom of God on earth which he was seeking to introduce. For "ideas," as it has been said, "must be given through something," and the figures and forms through which they are to be given are in great measure determined in every age by the consciousness of the past out of which it is developing. The whole teaching of Jesus might be described as one continuous effort to extract the kernel from the husk in which it had to grow; to detach the deeper spiritual truth he sought to convey from the form in which he was obliged to convey it; to raise the Messianic idea above the accidents of its prophetic vesture and the cruder sensuous interpretation, which the popular mind had attached to it. Whatever view we may take of the miracles of the Gospel, we can at least clearly see that Jesus was constantly struggling against the crude supernaturalism of his day; that he sought persistently to silence the report of wonder working that attended him (and which, we may say, could not fail to attend anyone who profoundly stirred the spirits of men in such an age), and that he refused with indignation and scorn the demand for a sign from heaven, regarding this demand as an indication of the corruption and perversity of those who made it. "An evil and adulterous generation

seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonah," *i.e.* as Luke interprets it, the sign involved in the preaching and life of Jesus himself.[1] These were the natural signs in which a pure mind might be expected to read the truth, as clearly as a practised eye could detect in the sky the promise of fair or stormy weather. "Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"[2]

The tragic crisis of the life and death of Jesus lay just in this, that while he satisfied the deepest spiritual want of his time, he absolutely contradicted and, we might almost say trampled upon, all its vulgar ambitions. Hence the same penetrating magnetism of spirit which drew to him those whose hearts were set upon a moral deliverance, repelled with the utmost force of antipathy all those whose hearts were set upon a supernatural gratification of worldly passions. For the essence of the teaching of Jesus was that, here and now, in the ordinary course of the world, and without any supernatural interference, the only real power is the power of

[1] Luke xi. 29. Matthew's interpretation of this saying (Matt. xii. 39) is a curious instance of the tendency to turn even the words that denounce the miracle-seeking spirit into nutriment for that spirit.

[2] Matt. xvi. 3.

goodness and of God; and that if goodness is resisted, it is only because it is not yet mature, and needs resistance to mature it. It is because the death is not yet fully accomplished, through which alone spiritual life can be developed, that that life seems still to be feeble and oppressed by hostile powers. And, however we are to explain the prophecy, that 'this generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled,' the words of Jesus show that the Jewish apocalyptic form in which he had to express the idea of the ultimate triumph of good, did not hide from him the truth that it is only by a gradual process of evolution, and not by one sudden manifestation of divine omnipotence, that such a spiritual victory is to be gained. Take, for instance, that remarkable parable contained in what is now believed to be the earliest of the Gospels, the Gospel of St. Mark, but which is omitted in the other evangelists,—perhaps because its full significance was not seen by them:[1] "So is the kingdom of heaven, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise day and night, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is ripe, immediately he putteth in the

[1] Mark iv. 26.

sickle, for the harvest is come." Could any symbol more definitely express the slow natural process of growth by which a new spiritual faith must ripen in the hearts of men? A similar lesson is contained in the parable of the mustard-seed, and in that of the leaven which was "hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened."[1] And it appears even more clearly in the apocalyptic discourses of the Gospel of St. Luke, where the warning is given that "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation," and that the disciples of Christ will not need to say, 'Lo, here! and Lo, there!' for the kingdom of God is already in the midst of them,[2] already present and growing in their own hearts, so that they do not require to look beyond themselves for the evidences of it. Its evidence lies simply in its existence as a power that lives and develops in the spirit of man.

[1] Matt. xiii. 33.

[2] Luke xvii. 21; cf. Matt. xxiv. 23.

LECTURE SEVENTH.

THE LESSON OF DEATH AND OF THE DEATH OF JESUS.

The Idea of a Suffering and Dying Messiah—The Lesson of Death as interpreted by the Pantheists—The Lesson of Death as interpreted by Plato—Ambiguities in Plato's View—The Lesson of Death as interpreted by Jesus—The Death of the Cross—Its Import and St. Paul's View of it.

In the last lecture I attempted to indicate the main ideas which are contained in the teaching of Jesus according to the Synoptic Gospels. I attempted to show that there is a certain antithesis which runs through the life of Jesus, and which reaches its culmination and completion in his death—the antithesis, viz., between the kingdom of God as he conceived it, and that Messianic kingdom which was expected by the Jews. If a really tragic situation is one which contains conflicting elements, that cannot be brought to unity except by a collision which must be fatal to the representative of either or both of the interests involved, then there never was a more definitely tragic situation than that

which is presented to us in the Gospels. For Jesus, whatever view we may otherwise take of his personality, was one who, by faithfulness to the best that was in Judaism, had been carried beyond Judaism. He had penetrated through the figurative language in which the Old Testament described the triumph of the true Israel over all its enemies, to the idea of a purely spiritual victory not over, but for, all men; a victory to be won not by the 'striving and crying' of selfish ambition, or by a sudden miraculous display of physical power, but by a method which was the very reverse of all this. It was to be won by shunning all assertion, whether of individual or of national egoism; by casting aside as useless all the weapons of earthly warfare with which men are armed against each other; by meeting hate with love, self-assertion with self-sacrifice, the claims of right with the abnegation of all right that is not an expression of duty. On this view there could be no glory of superiority of one over another, except that of being his servant; no revenge of one upon another but that of heaping coals of fire upon his head by rendering good for evil; no joy of individual possession which did not begin with the consciousness that the individual derives everything that he has and is from God, and that he can possess it only as he gives it away.

Now it is easy to see that to ask the Jews to accept *this* as the essence of the Messianic kingdom—as the final triumph of the Jewish nationality over the world, and the last result of its long struggle against its enemies—was to bid that nationality 'die to live.' It was to tell it that it could be anything only if it lost itself in humanity, and made itself an organ of the universal life. It was to ask it to give up every exclusive claim or hope that it had cherished through the long years of exile and oppression. Yet Jesus, filled with the new spirit of religion, could not but make the claim that *this* should be accepted as the realisation of the Messianic kingdom, and *himself*, its first preacher, as the true Messiah; or, as he expressed it—choosing the one Messianic name that suited him—as the Son of Man, who, in realising the ideal of the Jew, found that he was realising the idea of man, *i.e.* of a weak finite being whose life is nevertheless rooted in the infinite. Thus the acts and words of Jesus were a challenge to all that was sensuous in the ideas, and all that was selfish in the aspirations, of his time and nation. The saying which the Gospel of John puts into his mouth, "For judgment am I come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind,"[1] may be the

[1] John ix. 39.

expression of later reflexion, but it exhibits the inmost nature of the crisis. The person and words of Jesus were a touchstone by which the baser and the nobler elements of Judaism were distinguished; by which the 'wise and prudent,' who were guided by expediency and not by truth, and who hid an inordinate worldly ambition under the disguise of a zeal for the cause of God, were divided from the 'babes,' whose minds were disinterestedly open to the new light. Hence the history, so far as we can trace it in the Gospels, is one of irritation and indignation on the part of the leaders of the Jewish nation, which continually increases with every new manifestation of the nature of the principles which Jesus represents and teaches; and which comes to a head when, on the basis of these principles, he makes the distinct assertion of his Messianic claims at Jerusalem; in other words, when he makes his final demand that *his* spiritual, because universal, kingdom of God should be substituted for the outward kingdom for which the Jews had been hoping. The accusation that Jesus said, "I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands,"[1] whether it was literally true or not, indicates the point at which the offence became intolerable, *i.e.* just when Jesus began to make it clear that the whole Judaic

[1] Mark xiv. 58.

system, with its outward ritual and ceremony, and all the beliefs and hopes connected therewith, must be swept away to make room for a system based upon a new spiritual foundation. Yet, on the other hand, we may observe that just this course of conduct, which excited against Jesus an immediate antagonism that could not be satisfied with anything but his destruction, was the very means necessary to make manifest the nature of his new principle and to enable it to triumph. The idyllic charm of the early Galilean preaching of Jesus to simple minds, who at a word were often ready to forsake all and follow the new Teacher, was necessary as the initiatory stage of the new religion. But the gospel of peace could not show its power till it had awakened the sword against it. The faith in a Father in heaven who is manifested in the life of man on earth, could not reveal its real meaning till, in the power of it, the Son of Man had shown himself able to meet all the sorrows that flesh is heir to, and all those which men can inflict upon each other. The lesson that by dying to himself man can live, and, indeed, that this is for him the only way to spiritual life, could not be taught except by one who made the last sacrifice of the natural life itself, and who, in making it, faced the utmost manifestation of evil passion in others. The death of Jesus was necessary to sum up and complete

his life, as it was the final and conclusive exhibition of the principle of which he was the representative.

The idea that the true meaning of life is revealed only in death, is one that has haunted the mind of man in all ages; but the Christian interpretation of it has peculiarities which may usefully be illustrated by a comparison with some of the other forms in which it has presented itself. Sometimes it has taken the *pantheistic* form of the consciousness that the finite shows what it is as finite, only in passing away. In other words, the life of the finite, even from the beginning, has the principle of death in it; and all that it can do is just by passing away to betray its own secret. But in thus betraying the secret of its illusiveness, it carries us beyond itself; for the transitory cannot be conceived except in relation to the enduring. The consciousness that grasps the illusiveness of life must have risen above death: it, in a sense, conquers death by making it an object of thought; for in order to contemplate the transitory by itself as an object, it must take its stand on the eternal. Hence, the pantheist, meditating on the finite and transitory nature of all things, often rises to a kind of passionless heroism, which escapes the fear of death just by recognising its universality. Discovering that the natural life is a process of dying, which is concealed from the ordinary con-

sciousness by various disguises, he seeks to withdraw from all such life as an illusion, that he may find rest in that which alone *is*, because it is eternal. All that death touches—and it touches everything finite—he can abstract from; he can let it drop as worthless, and so dying to the transitory and finite, he can live to the infinite and eternal.

The defect of this attitude of thought, in a religious point of view, is that the eternal to which it rises is empty and abstract: at best, it is simply the general law which manifests itself in the endless change of finite things, the necessity which reveals itself in their contingency. And the heroism which such a faith produces, is a fearless, but also a hopeless fatalism, which sets aside all feelings connected with that which perishes as empty and illusive, and accepts the necessity which it cannot escape. "All that fate takes away from me, I can dispense with; because I know that it *is* only to pass away; and to fix the mind of the affections on it, as if it were an enduring reality, were to deceive myself." Thus the spirit of the pantheist may rise above finitude and look down upon it; but it does not understand what it has done, does not yet recognise that the being which is conscious of its finitude, must itself be more than merely finite; that it cannot *really* be bound to the passing existence from which it can thus *ideally* separate itself. And, on the other

hand, the universal principle with which a self-conscious being can thus identify himself, cannot be a mere fate to which he, like other finite things is subjected, but must have a spiritual existence kindred with his own.

This *second* mode of reflexion, which tends, on the one hand, to link the thinking spirit of man with the universal and infinite, to which it raises itself; and, on the other hand, tends to substitute for the bare idea of a fate or general law to which all things and beings are subjected, the idea of a spiritual principle which through all the change and contingency of the passing finite world is realising an absolute good, we find for the first time clearly expressed in the *Platonic philosophy.* Plato, in other words, gives us a new reading of the maxim, "Die to live," a reading in which the negative element still predominates, though not in the same exclusive sense as in the Indian Pantheism or Buddhism. For the universal, in which the particular is to be lost, is no longer conceived as an abstract substance or law of necessity, but rather as a final cause or rational design which, as such, is not alien to the intelligence that recognises it. To give up the particular to the universal, to die to self, that we may live to God, is no longer a fatalistic acceptance of the extinction of the finite self in the gulf of necessity, but the surrender of our

unreal natural existence, in order that the spiritual element in us may rise to a higher life. This is the lesson which Plato, taking his text from the death of Socrates, seeks to teach in the *Phaedo*. Philosophy is there represented as a 'practice for death,' because through death alone can true life be reached. And this practice Plato—so far agreeing with the Indian pantheists—conceives as consisting in a continued effort, by asceticism and abstraction, to liberate the intelligence from the bonds of flesh in which it is bound. The natural life is the spirit's death, and it is declared, with a fanciful play of etymology, that the body (σῶμα) is its tomb (σῆμα).[1] The true life is the death of death. Would it not then be folly for Socrates, who all his life has been practising for death, and, so far as might be, seeking to extinguish the natural life in himself, to wish to escape that which he has all along been pursuing? Rather he will welcome the hemlock as destroying the last thread that still binds the soul, and hinders its escape from the prison house. He has already, so far as in him lies, died to the illusory life of sense, which prevents the real life of thought from manifesting itself, and his acceptance of the cup of death is but the final act of courage necessary to set the immortal spirit free from the toils of mortality.

[1] This derivation is given in the *Cratylus*, 400 C.

There has been much controversy as to what Plato really meant in the *Phaedo*, and especially whether he teaches the doctrine of an individual immortality. On the one hand, the process by which Plato represents the soul as rising to the universal life is rather a negative than a positive one: it is too like a mere 'shuffling off the mortal coil,' and it tells us what the life sought *is not*, rather than what it *is*. Farther, according to the usual interpretation of the Platonic doctrine of ideas, it points to a reality of the universal in which the particulars are lost, and not to one into which they are taken up as elements. On the other hand, it is quite clear that Plato regards the soul of man as standing in an exceptional position among other things and beings. It is for him a particular being which yet is in possession of a universal life, and which, therefore, can survive the loss of all it has in common with other finite things and beings, and all that binds it to them as finite.[1] Hence death is not death to it, as it is to them; but, in some sense, it is destined still to live in that universal life, to which it sacrifices or devotes itself. What positively this means to Plato, it is not quite easy to determine, so much is his last word on these subjects veiled in mythic forms. But this much we can see that, in Plato's view, man's life is rooted in the universal

[1] This seems to be the force of the last argument in the *Phaedo*, 105 *seq.* Cf. *Republic*, 609 *seq.*

and the divine; that the eternal and the infinite is, so to speak, the presupposition of all his conscious existence; and that to awaken him to the 'reminiscence' of this primal fact, or, in other words, to bring it into clear consciousness as the first principle of all his thought and being, is the great aim of all intellectual culture. The highest object which man can propose to himself in this world is, therefore, to find his way back to the original spiritual unity from which he springs; and death itself, accepted as Socrates accepted it, may be regarded not merely as a natural event which puts an end to a natural existence, but as the culminating point in the life of a spiritual being, whose return upon himself is also a return to God. This, Plato not only teaches as an abstract doctrine, but he makes us realise it as a fact in the picture of Socrates, which he brings before us; in the lofty serenity of the philosopher, who regards death as the gate of life, and at the last moment, with a fine combination of humour and pathos, bids his friend offer for him the usual sacrifice to Asclepius for recovery from an illness, because he has at last found freedom from the 'long disease' of human existence.

Even here, however, we may recognise an essential imperfection in the Platonic view of death as the culmination of life. For, as he represents it in the

Phaedo, the process seems to have no necessary relation to the end or result. The soul of man finds itself in this life banished from its native region, shut into a prison of clay, buried in the body as in a tomb. Its awaking consciousness of the ideal and the divine is mythically represented as a recollection of its prenatal glories; and it is called upon to make it the supreme aim of life to free itself from the load of clay that hinders it from knowing its true nature—

> "Such harmony is in immortal souls,
> But while this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it."

The soul struggles in the darkness and confusion of sense to reawaken the consciousness of the divine which it has lost; it seeks by a discipline of abstraction and ascetic self-restraint to remove the scales from its eyes; and it accepts death as a final liberation from the illusion of life. But, as there seems to be no reason why the soul should have been thus obstructed or obscured by the finite conditions into which it is brought, so the effort to escape these conditions is, at least as represented in the *Phaedo*, merely negative, merely the putting away of an external hindrance. It is not made manifest that the obstruction is itself necessary to the life it obstructs, or is in any way a condition of its development. Still less is there any attempt to prove that the natural existence

which appears at first as an obstruction, a hindrance to be overcome by the spirit, itself furnishes the material for the new spiritual life; so that, if in one sense it has to be destroyed or consumed, in another sense it has to be restored and reconstructed in that life. If, therefore, according to the philosophy of the *Phaedo*, the death of nature is conceived as making way for the life of spirit, and if in this sense death may be the very crown and culmination of life, when it is accepted as the final step in the purifying and liberating process; yet it cannot be said either (1) that death subserves positively the life it makes room for, or (2) that there is any survival or restoration of that which dies in the new existence reached through its death. If Socrates dies that he may live, yet it is not made clear to us that his death positively manifests the new life, or directly affords us any clue to its characteristics. And as little can we say that that in him which dies, dies to live again.

Now, in both these points of view a new conception of life, and of death as its culmination, seems to arise in connection with the life and death of Jesus as represented in the Gospels. For, in the first place, Jesus does not appear at any time to admit that conception of the absolute opposition between the universal and the particular, the spiritual and the natural, which Plato maintains in

the *Phaedo*, and from which he never quite freed himself. Starting with the idea of a Divine Father, who has revealed Himself in the natural world and in the natural existence of man, Jesus could not think of the spiritual development of man as consisting simply in his freeing himself from the bonds of nature. The defect of man's condition did not for him lie in the mere presence of the natural life in a being essentially spiritual; but only in this, that the natural life does not acknowledge a spiritual as its presupposition and its limit. It is not that man is a subject, who as finite stands in relation to finite objects, and finds in them the ends of his activity: it is that the consciousness of self and the consciousness of the objective world are not brought into definite relation with the idea of God which underlies them, and hence, that the satisfaction of the self in these finite ends is not subordinated to, or made the expression of, the divine end and idea. And because it is not thus subordinated, two results follow. In the first place, the satisfaction of man is contingent and transitory, dependent on his relation to objects in an external world which he cannot, except partially, subject to his purposes, and which, even so far as he does so subject them, are exposed to the law whereby all finite things decay and pass away. His realisation of himself, in this point of view, is the realisa-

tion of a being who is doomed to die in things which perish with the using. In the second place, the ends in which he seeks the realisation of himself, as they are not determined by the universal principle in relation to which all individuals are at one, are ends for him which are not ends for others. Hence he can carry them out only in conflict with others, only in a struggle for existence in which he must suffer and inflict the utmost evils, and in which, even if temporarily victorious, he must ultimately be defeated. For the self that has not surrendered itself to God, or, in other words, has not recognised itself as the organ of a universal principle, has an egoism that is capable of infinite extension; and the necessary collision of such infinite claims is the cause of a war without truce and without end, in which everyone, as in his natural being he is still finite, must finally be beaten. That suffering and that evil prevail in the world is the necessary result of these two things. For *suffering* is just the result of the limitation of finite existences by the law to which they are subjected, as parts of a greater whole. And *evil* lies mainly in the collision of natural beings, who, as also spiritual, are rival selves, each with an infinite claim to satisfaction as against the others.

According to this view, then, man is at war with the world which does not satisfy his craving for

happiness, and with his fellowmen who are his rivals in the pursuit of it, not because he is a natural being, but because he is a spiritual being in a natural form. For it is a consequence of this that the universality of the principle of his life at first shows itself mainly in the exaggeration of his natural claims,—in a self-seeking which rebels against the limits of nature, and breaks out into murderous hate against other men. And, so long as this inversion of the true relation of the infinite to the finite remains, even the religious instinct is apt to take the perverse form of the belief in a God whose function is mainly to fulfil the demands of selfish desire and ambition, to overcome the antagonism of nature, and put the feet of his favourites on the necks of their enemies. Now, the teaching of Jesus as represented in the Gospels simply inverts all the ways of natural self-seeking. It puts the universal before the particular, the spiritual before the natural, God before self; and in doing so, Jesus claims, like Plato, to be simply restoring the primitive order of man's life, or carrying back human life to that which is its presupposition. But he does not dualistically oppose this principle to the principle of the natural life, or assert that salvation and happiness are only to be found in getting rid of that life. On the contrary, he holds to the idea that the *postponement* of natural to spiritual

good is the way, and the only way, whereby the natural good itself can be secured; or, in other words, that the natural good is lost, when it is put first. "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."[1] Thus the restoration of the natural ends of life through their negation is not only possible, but it is the only possible way whereby they can be realised at all. In a similar spirit, Jesus calls upon his disciples not to seek good for themselves as against their fellowmen, but rather than that, to surrender all that is claimed by them, even the most obvious rights of person and property. "If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also"[2] But this refusal to claim anything for themselves as individuals, he does not advocate on the ground that his disciples as such have no rights, or that their individual existence is simply to be lost in the universal. On the contrary, he teaches that each individual has the highest personal worth as a 'son of God,' and that he has, or rather has conferred upon him, a title not only to the kingdom of heaven, but also to the inheritance of the earth. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is *the kingdom of heaven*. Blessed are the meek: for they shall *inherit the earth*." Yet this

[1] Matt. vi. 33. [2] Matt. v. 40.

title man cannot immediately realise as a natural being, but only through the development of the spiritual life in him; in other words, it is not his, as one who stands up for his individual interest and honour as *against* others, but as one who has made himself the instrument of the universal life which he has in common with them. Hence the immediate renunciation of his rights, the immediate refusal to stand against his fellows in the selfish struggle, is not merely *one* possible way of taking their lives into his own, and making them the instruments of his own highest life; but it is the only way in which they can cease to be his enemies or rivals, and become his helpers and associates in the pursuit of a good which is common to all.

Now it is easy to see that here also, as in the case of the Platonic Socrates, the path of death is the path of life; and that here also, in order to point the lesson, it is necessary that the path should be pursued to the end, to the extreme point of natural death, undergone in maintaining the spiritual principle. But the Platonic idea of a mere escape from the natural and the finite is altogether set aside. What is now sought is not escape but conquest; not a riddance from the illusive power of the finite, but a recognition that it is a good, only as the manifestation of a still greater good. "Heartily, know," says Emerson, "when the half-gods go, the

gods arrive." It is in a like spirit that Jesus declares that he who gives up anything for the service of God and the good of man will receive an hundredfold. His own life also, cutting himself loose, as he did, from all the immediate good of life and even from the ties of kindred and home, in order to find everything in the new bond of brotherhood which he had founded,[1] was a practical demonstration of this principle. And his death, coming as it did, as the natural result of his renunciation, not merely of all individual ambition for himself, but also of the national life and the national hopes of the Jews, was the final manifestation of his faith, that the renunciation of every natural good for that which is spiritual, contains in itself the promise, not only of the spiritual good that is sought, but also of every natural good as flowing from it.

Again, if we look at the principle of Jesus in the other aspect, and consider his absolute rejection of all antagonistic self-seeking, whether it be the self-seeking of the individual for himself, or of the nation for itself, we come to the same result. The growing hostility to Jesus of all those whose life was bound up with any of these forms of self-seeking, was just the natural result of his renunciation of them all both in his actions and his words, and it was the appro-

[1] "Who are my mother and my brethren?" Matt. xii. 48; Mark iii. 31, cf. 21; Luke viii. 19.

priate test of its genuineness. Only as against hate could the conquering power of love be manifested; and the utmost expression of hate was just the means of such manifestation. The faith that broke down all the divisions between men's lives, and taught them to regard themselves as the children of one Father, necessarily awakened against it every interest that was attached to such divisions; and it was a moral necessity that the individual who had challenged these forces in virtue of such a faith, should conquer them only by showing that it could sustain him against them even to the death. In this sense it may be admitted that his death has become the life of the world; for it was the culminating expression of the principle out of which its true life springs.

We learn thus to look upon the death of Jesus not merely as the accidental fate of goodness in conflict with evil, as the natural fruit of Jewish bigotry and Roman indifference; nor, again, as an external interference of divine benevolence with the ordinary course of human existence; but as the highest revelation of the divine life in man in conflict with the evil of the world. In this sense the Cross may be regarded as the necessary tragic solution of a conflict of principles, the necessary issue which the new faith required to manifest itself and conquer the forces that opposed it. The saying, that the "blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church," has here a

special application. In all ages the act of sealing the truth with the blood of the preacher has had an effect on the minds of men that seems disproportionate to its importance as an event. He who turns that, which most men receive passively as a fate inflicted on them by nature, into a supreme act of will, and surrenders his life as a sacrifice to some cause or idea, gives a kind of universal value to the individual life he thus sacrifices. He binds his personality to the idea for which he has died by a bond that is not easily unloosed, and, at the same time, he gives to the idea itself a personal attractiveness which it wanted so long as it was not thus embodied. The life of Socrates, devoted as it was to the purpose of placing ethics on a universal foundation, could scarcely have had the world-wide influence it has had, if his death had not shown how entirely he had detached his moral being from the semi-naturalistic basis of national custom on which morality had hitherto rested, and how firmly he had based it anew on the rational self-consciousness of the individual. But, in a still more direct way, the death of Jesus was the summing up and culminating expression of the principle of his life, both in its negative and its positive aspects. In its negative aspect, it was the death of one who was the first representative of the universal principle of religion; and it was a death directly brought upon

him by his opposition to those who identified that principle with the exclusive claim of a particular nation. The completion of the sacrifice of the individual was just the act by which the supremacy of the universal principle could be shown; and, therefore, the act which could alone give it its conquering power, its power to stir the hearts of men and draw them out of their selfish prejudices and national or social limitations. Hence, on the positive side, it was the first conclusive manifestation of a charity which made no reservation, and which, just because it recognised no possible hindrances or limitations to its outflow in the antagonism of others, was powerful enough to break down all such antagonism, and to originate a new life of brotherhood for all men. The death of Jesus was thus, it might be said, the first clear demonstration that the idea of a Universal God which underlies all religion is not merely the abstract idea of an infinite Being in which everything finite is merged and lost, but that it is a productive principle which can restore out of itself all, and more than all, it seems to take away.

I have gone thus far to show the way in which the ethical meaning of Christ's life and teaching culminates in his death, because it partly explains the exclusive prominence given by St. Paul to that death and all that is associated with it, and thus

enables us to bridge over the gulf between the simple humanity of the Synoptic narrative and the theological idealism, as we may call it, which we find in his epistles. St. Paul, we must remember, stood at some distance from the facts of the life of Jesus, and for that very reason, perhaps, he was in a better position to estimate their general meaning, than those whose minds were occupied with details. In fact, we may say that for St. Paul these facts were lost in the one fact of Christ's death, and that he apprehended that fact not in itself, but entirely as the manifestation of a spiritual principle. And the nature of that principle is just what we have already explained. Instead of a conquering Messiah, who should realise the kingdom of God on earth by force, by giving to his chosen people the rule over all nations, St. Paul sees Jesus as, indeed, the Messiah, the great deliverer who had fulfilled the hopes of Israel; but as a Messiah who had realised these hopes in just the opposite way to that which the Jews had expected—not by self-exaltation but by self-humiliation, not by using his power to crush antagonism, but by divesting himself of all outward power so that he might conquer by the weapons of the spirit and by them alone. He was, in a word, one who sought to overcome all opposition only by bearing its utmost expression; who deprived others of the power of standing against him by refusing to stand against

them; and who acted on the principle that when man lays down his arms, God himself fights for him; or, in other words, that he who has no interest but the universal, has omnipotence on his side.[1] On this view, he who has ceased to have enemies, deprives those who call themselves his enemies of all their power; nay, he irresistibly wins them over to himself. They may spend all their fury upon him, but they cannot resist the voice of heaven that speaks to them from the grave of their victim. This is the one thought which runs through the epistles of St. Paul in which the lesson of Jesus, 'Die to live'—the lesson which in the life of Jesus had been expressed in the simple characters of human action and human suffering, human love contending with human hate, and overcoming it by its deeper strength and self-consistency—is, as it were, lifted into the region of universal thought, and expressed in the large letters of a comprehensive theory of God's dealings with the world and with man.

[1] Cf. Browning's *Instans Tyrannus.*

LECTURE EIGHTH.

THE TEACHING OF ST. PAUL.

In what sense St. Paul gave Universality to the Gospel—Why the Cross is the Central Point in his Doctrine—His sudden Conversion from the Idea of a Conquering, to that of a Suffering Messiah—His Mission to the Gentiles, as a Consequence of this—The Antithesis of the Law and the Gospel—The Separation of Christ from Humanity—Difference between St. Paul and the Jerusalem Church—What Christianity owes to each.

I HAVE now endeavoured to sum up the general purport of the teaching of Jesus, and to show how the events of his life and death were the most vivid and palpable demonstration of the lesson he had to teach. At the same time, I indicated that St. Paul was the first who went beyond the special words and actions of the Master, and grasped that lesson in all the extent of its application. St. Paul thus emancipated Christianity from the limitations of Judaism, and from all the special conditions of its first expression. It is true that the teaching of Christ, by its purely ideal or spiritual character, already involved the negation of all national, as of all legal or sacer-

dotal restrictions. But it only *involved* this; for, as practically Christ did not carry his ministry beyond the limits of his own country, he had not to deal directly with the question of the admission of the Gentiles, or of the conditions under which they should be combined with the Jews in the Christian Church. We may fairly say that the ideal or spiritual character of the gospel of Jesus implied its universality; but the opposition he had actually to encounter was one excited, not by the extent, but by the nature of the kingdom of heaven which he was founding. For us it may be clear enough that the principle which caused his conflict with the Pharisees, really implies the expansion of his church beyond the limits of the Jewish nationality, as well as the removal of all specially Jewish customs from the conditions of admission into it; yet this consequence was not immediately present even to the most enlightened of his disciples. And Christ's own assertions, that the new law was the fulfilment of the old, might easily lead them to overlook his equally strong declaration that the new could not permanently retain the form of the old, that the 'new wine' must burst the 'old bottles.'

But St. Paul, from the very moment of his conversion, conceived of Christianity as a religion for the world. He was not one of the original disciples, and he therefore wanted that minute knowledge of the ways and words of Jesus which the original disciples

possessed; but, partly perhaps for that very reason, he was more ready to seize upon the great general features, the master-meaning and tendency of his whole work. The German proverb that speaks of those who 'cannot see the wood for the trees,' has often been verified, but never probably in so marked a way as here. Without the original disciples, we could not have had that close initiation into the life of the Master, that detailed picture of the humanity of Jesus with its unwavering faith and all-embracing charity, which is the permanent charm of Christianity. But those who stood close to the individual life in all the fulness of its particulars, could not grasp the general idea of it, the new view of the relation of the human and the divine it involved, so readily as a more distant observer. For St. Paul, what we may in a narrower sense call the personal element of the gospel history disappeared altogether; and Jesus was simply the Christ, the living embodiment of the Messianic idea, who at once disappointed the old Messianic expectations of the Jews, and gave them a higher fulfilment.

It is another way of expressing the same idea to say that, for St. Paul, the whole meaning of the life of Jesus was gathered up in his death. He was determined not to 'know anything' in religion 'save Jesus Christ and him crucified.'[1] "His only love" was thus

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 2. Cf. Rom. vi, 3, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death."

"sprung from his only hate"; for it was the preaching of a crucified man as the Messiah, which first raised in him all the antagonism of the Pharisee, and made him a persecutor: and, after the vision on the road to Damascus, which convinced him that Jesus had risen from the dead, it was just the idea of such a Messiah that was the central principle of his own preaching, from which all his other ethical and religious conceptions were derived. His theology might be said to be one long development of the consequences involved in the fact that Jesus, as the Messiah, had come *not* to reign but to suffer, *not* to be ministered unto but to minister, *not* to exalt himself as the triumphant deliverer of his nation, but to 'humble himself and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.'[1] The triumph, indeed, was to come, but it was to come not by being sought for, but by being abandoned. It was to come not by the effort of man but by the power of God; and this was St. Paul's way of saying, that it was to come not by directly striving for it, but by a divine order of the world which made its attainment the necessary result of the spirit that renounces it and refuses to seek it at all. In the death of Christ, therefore, as seen in the light of his resurrection, St. Paul found a kind of illustrated epitome, a condensed picture, which showed as by a flash of lightning the principle and meaning

[1] Phil. ii. 8.

of the whole divinely appointed order of the world. The simple intuition of Jesus, that "he who would save his life must lose it," was, in the first place, projected into the form of an outward event, as the history of a Messiah who died to rise again; and then, in the second place, it was reinterpreted, as the great moral law of the life of man. It is true there was some loss in this process, which first externalised the law of life as a great divine tragedy, from which the same law in its deeper spiritual sense was afterward gathered as an inference. The idea that the spiritual life directly involves death to self, and that, therefore, for man, in whom the natural depends upon the spiritual, this death is the basis even of the natural life, and the only way to the true realisation even of the natural good of man,—this idea, which was the 'open secret of Jesus,' is somewhat obscured in St. Paul; for to him the result appears to come, not by a process of development like that in which the death of the seed leads to the life of the plant, but by an external providential arrangement. But this impression is partly counteracted by St. Paul's clear insight into the way in which humility, faith, and love open the soul of man to the access of a higher spirit. And, even apart from this, it has the great advantage of universalising and objectifying the moral principle by translating it into terms of theology, and so, as it were, writing it in large letters on the clouds

of heaven. If to recognise that "morality is the nature of things" is to turn it into religion, and so give it an infinite access of strength; then St. Paul's bold proclamation of the doctrine that it was through death only that Christ the Son of God could open up the gates of life, was the most important step ever taken in the development of Christian thought; for it made the ethical principle of self-abnegation into a revelation of the divine order in the government of the world. Thus the law of the moral life of man, in the Christian interpretation of it, becomes the counterpart, as it is the highest revelation, of the love of God.

Viewing it in this way, we can see how it is that St. Paul at once connects the *natural* death and resurrection of Christ, with a *moral* death to sin and a rising again to newness of life in his followers. It has, indeed, been said that St. Paul "turns the transcendent eschatological idea into an immanent ethical one,"[1] *i.e.* that he begins with an external view of Christ's death and resurrection as the manifestation of a power which will also raise his people from the dead, and that then he spiritualises this doctrine by translating it into the idea that the ethical principle of self-abnegation, which we receive by sympathy with Christ's supreme sacrifice, will be in us, as it was in him, the

[1] Pfleiderer's *Paulinism*, i. 20 (English translation).

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source of a new life, which is far higher than that which we surrender. But this is not the whole truth: for we have to remember that, for St. Paul, a dying Messiah meant a Messiah who gave himself up to death at the hands of his enemies, instead of using his superior natural powers to crush them; and that this representation of the Messiah could have the power over him which it had, only because he saw in it the supreme illustration and type of the principle of self-sacrificing love. When, therefore, the vision on the road to Damascus convinced him that Jesus, whom he was persecuting, had risen again, this resurrection came to him as the divine stamp of approval upon the morality of self-sacrifice, the symbol of the conquering power of the principle of love. Hence, in this point of view, it would be truer to say that the ethical principle in St. Paul begat the theological, than that the theological begat the ethical. It was no doubt the weakness of St. Paul, as contrasted with his Master, that he needed to see the spiritual law of life outwardly illustrated in a supernatural vision, ere he could believe in it as a truth of inward experience. And, in this point of view, those are 'more blessed' who have not needed to see such visions in order to believe. But, ultimately, it was the dawning moral discernment, the awaking consciousness that a Messiah who conquered by

outward force could never deliver the soul from its slavery to itself, or enable it to overcome the world, that gave such meaning and power to the vision, and made it with such apparent suddenness to revolutionise the whole life of St. Paul. This being the case, it was by an immediate necessity that he at once interpreted the vision—which had itself probably arisen out of a conflict between his moral intuitions and his religious beliefs, as a warrant to him to reorganise the latter in the spirit of the former; or, in other words, as an authorisation to yield himself completely to the new principle of life, which the very *thought* of such a Messiah had already awakened within him.

It is a confirmation of this view that St. Paul immediately connects with the idea of a *crucified* Messiah the idea of a *universal* Messiah, and that this latter idea at once awakens in him a conviction of his own mission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. At the very moment when he renounced the belief in a conquering king, who should set his own feet and the feet of his nation on the necks of their enemies, and substituted for it the idea of a Christ who should overcome only by suffering and self-sacrifice, it became obvious to him that the same law must be applied to the interpretation of the promised rule of Israel over the nations. The followers of Christ, like their Master,

could only conquer the world by becoming its servants; and the privilege of the Jew could, therefore, only mean that he was to be the greatest benefactor of mankind, or the medium through which the divine love should flow out to them. The chosen people also must die to live, must renounce its special national claims in order to vindicate them; and if, contrariwise, they attempted to assert them, the only effect would be that they should lose that which they seemed to have. The question, "What advantage then hath the Jew?" is met only by the answer, "Unto them were committed the oracles of God."[1] "Theirs are the fathers, and of them as concerning the flesh Christ came."[2] In other words, they are the greatest of the servants of humanity, and they can maintain their position only by continuing to be so. In any other sense, their privileges are gone for ever, and if the attempt is made to retain them, they are smitten with barrenness. To St. Paul, the 'son of a Pharisee,' whose whole mind had been occupied with meditation upon the religious privileges of the Jews, the idea of a crucified Messiah thus became at once the idea of a Messiah for all mankind. And with it immediately arose the thought that he himself—the first to whom the Messiah had been revealed in such a light—must show his faithfulness to the re-

[1] Rom. iii. 1, 2. [2] Rom. ix. 5.

velation by undertaking the mission to the Gentiles. According to the narrative of the Acts, his first word, even when he was trembling under the awe of the supernatural vision, was: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to *do?*"[1] And for St. Paul the answer was not far to seek. To the fervid soul of the converted persecutor the step from the new premises to the practical conclusion was direct and inevitable. "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me, *in order that* I might preach him among the heathen."[2] And "without conferring with flesh and blood," St. Paul at once begins the great mission which carried Christianity beyond the walls of the synagogue within which it had hitherto been confined, and made it the religion of the world.

At the same time, while carrying out this denationalising process, St. Paul never ceased to be a 'Hebrew of the Hebrews,' whose whole habits of thought and expression were moulded by Jewish theology. Even in contending with Judaism, therefore, he takes his stand upon its principles, and uses the dialectical weapons of its Rabbinical schools. And, while he illustrates the principle of Christianity by contrast with that of Judaism, he always maintains that that contrast is not absolute, but that Christianity is the necessary goal and culmination of the Jewish religion, and finds its evidence in the sacred

[1] Acts ix. 6. [2] Gal. i. 15, 16.

books of that religion itself. For him, the Law is a transitionary stage, which looks back to a principle of faith that existed before it and remains after it—a principle to the fuller realisation of which the Law was an instrument, and for which it therefore necessarily makes way. If, therefore, in comparison with the Gospel, the precepts of the Law may be regarded as 'weak and beggarly elements,'[1] yet, in another point of view, they are the necessary preparation for it. The Law was a παιδαγωγός to bring men to Christ. If it brought no deliverance to man from the slavery to his lower self, if rather it only awakened in him a consciousness of the power of evil that had subjected him, and weakened his resistance by the feeling of the hopelessness of his struggle with an enemy which had so deep a hold on his nature; yet this intense consciousness of an evil of which, as it seemed, man could never rid himself without ceasing to be himself, was necessary to make him renounce self-seeking, even in the last subtle form of the effort to be his own saviour, or to work out a claim for himself as against the divine justice. It was thus necessary to prepare him for the surrender of his whole soul to a power which, in one sense, was *not himself*, yet through which only he could be himself, or realise the good for which he existed. Hence, while for St. Paul the

[1] Gal. iv. 9.

law is "holy, and just, and good," yet it slays man and does not revive him; it fills him with a sense of weakness and a "fearful looking for of judgment." But this very despair of self is just what is needed for the reception of the infinite hope; and he who ceases to struggle for his own life, finds the divine life streaming into him and making him its organ. He for whom the consciousness of self has thus lost all that divides it from the consciousness of God, has in one sense ceased to *be*, but in another he has for the first time begun truly to exist. "Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."[1]

In this way St. Paul at once sets Law and Gospel in direct antagonism, and yet brings them together as stages in the education of the religious consciousness of man; or, to state the matter more exactly, he makes the Gospel embrace the Law as the necessary negative condition of its own realisation. Nay, even *sin itself*, as its utmost power is shown only under the Law—which produces a distinct *consciousness* of sin, and so prepares the way for the negation of it and for the reception of a new principle of life—even sin itself, from this point of view, is shown to form part of the divine order. For God "hath concluded all under sin,"[2] that they might be prepared to receive

[1] Gal. ii. 20. [2] Gal. iii. 22: cf. Rom. xi. 32.

righteousness by the new way of faith. On the one hand, the intensification of sin, due to the consciousness of it awakened by the Law, goes along with an intensified feeling of weakness in self and of slavery to the power of evil; and, on the other hand, it is a necessary condition or transition stage to that liberation from sins, which is possible only to those who have lost themselves to find themselves again in God. Sin is not sin in the deepest sense till it is conscious, the sin of one who knows the divine law he breaks; yet just this very consciousness, while in one way it deepens the sin, in another way prepares for its extinction. The rude outbreak of passion in a nature which has not yet awakened to its own possibilities is evil, but it is evil in an undeveloped form, because not yet directly set against good. If it is half devil, it is also half brute. "We cannot" *hate* "the highest till we know it." On the other hand *when* we know it, we cannot altogether hate it. 'The law of our mind' will then necessarily, as St. Paul puts it, be striving against 'the law of our members,' and making us feel sin as a slavery, though it cannot give us the strength to emancipate ourselves. Nay, the very effort to do so can only intensify our feeling of inability; and, indeed, so far as it is an effort to establish our own righteousness, it may itself be regarded as a

continuation of the very evil from which it seeks to escape. In other words, in so far as it is an effort after virtue in which self is not renounced or surrendered, it is a self-contradictory endeavour to combine self-seeking with self-devotion.

In this way we can understand how St. Paul should regard the divine law as in itself nothing but a provocation to sin, a means of ripening it to its highest conscious development; and yet should conceive it to be divinely ordered in the history of the individual and the race, in order to prepare men for the reception of that higher life which comes to him through Christ. But why is it that he conceives this new spirit of life to come into man through Christ alone? It is because, as I have already said, he identifies the person of Christ with the principle which Christ had first fully expressed in life and death, the principle that only in losing his life can man save it. Christ is to him the being who revealed and realised—for he does not distinguish between these two things—who revealed and realised the true law of man's spiritual life. He is the 'second man from heaven,' who set the principle of self-negation in the place of the principle of self-seeking which appeared in the 'first man,' Adam, and which has ruled mankind ever since. Christ thus makes a new beginning, and through him a new spirit enters into humanity.

Faith in Christ and especially in his Cross is, so to speak, the objective counterpart of the working of that spirit; and identification with *him* is the same thing as yielding to *it*. St. Paul cannot conceive that anything like this existed in the world before Christ, or that anything like it should exist in humanity afterwards, except by communication from him. He is the outward revelation of the divine love stooping to men, through whom alone man can rise to God. Until he came, such revelation of God as there was, could only tantalise man by the vision of an infinite ideal which stood inaccessible above and apart from him, but was not an immanent power within and without him that could enable him to overcome the world and himself. But now this ideal had shown itself as real *without*, in the death and resurrection of Christ; and it was showing itself as real *within*, for everyone in whom the same spirit was sympathetically awakened.

What shall we say of this creed of St. Paul? I think we must recognise, in the first place, that it has in it a deep psychological truth, which is due to the fact that it is a theory of religion and of the religious development of man directly borrowed from St. Paul's own experience. No one ever painted with more vivid colours than St. Paul the division of man's nature against itself, and, on the other

hand, the process by which it becomes reconciled with itself in God. The seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans gives, in a few expressive words, a picture of the war of man with himself, of the higher with the lower self, such as is to be found in no other religious or philosophical writer before him. And the eighth chapter presents to us St. Paul's great idea, the idea of a divine principle, which all creation has been groaning and travailing to realise, which in all the history of man has been striving towards self-consciousness, which first clearly manifested itself in the death and resurrection of Christ, and which now lives and works in all his followers, but which even in them is still groaning and travailing after a fuller manifestation, wherein the natural body shall be changed into a spiritual body, and the order of nature shall be made in all points comformable to the new life of spirit. This chapter indeed is perhaps the noblest expression that has ever been given to the idea that man's salvation must result from his giving himself up to a Power which is revealing itself in all that is within and without him, apart from which he is nothing, but as the organ of which he is reconciled with himself and has therefore all outward good things added to him.

At the same time St. Paul's expression of this essential truth is partly marred by two things, which

are closely connected with each other: in the first place, by the all but absolute antithesis made between the Law, which intensifies the consciousness of sin and so stimulates its development, and the spirit of life in Christ which, as appropriated by faith, delivers us at once from sin and from the law that condemns it. St. Paul transfers an abstract opposition of ideas directly to life, and so divides the history of man into two halves: in one of them the law of self-seeking is continually rooting itself more deeply in his soul, even by means of his very efforts to throw it off; while, in the other, the sudden outflow of good from above through the self-sacrifice of Christ, at once terminates the rule of evil and initiates a new life for man. Yet we cannot but feel that, even on St. Paul's own showing, the intensification of the consciousness of sin by the law is not merely a negative process which deepens sin; but that it is at the same time the growing manifestation of the spirit and the power of good within him. St. Paul seems to take the increasing sensitiveness to evil, which makes a man feel that he is worst just when he is on the point of breaking with evil, as if it were literally a deepening of the evil itself; whereas it is an evidence of the rise of that hunger of the soul for righteousness, which is certain to be satisfied, because it is already the beginning of its own satisfaction.

And, therefore, in spite of what he says of our "delighting in the law of God"[1] after the inward man, he conceives the dawn of the new life as a sudden conversion from evil to good, produced by a foreign influence which suddenly descends upon man from above, and which acts upon him independently of any active effort of his own. Thus he prepares the way for those Augustinian and Calvinistic doctrines, which practically involve the idea that man is the inert victim of external influence, and that, since the Fall at least, he has become the plaything of an evil power which can only be driven out of him by the equally external influence of the Divine Spirit—doctrines which set religion in direct antagonism to morality and the grace of God to the activity of man. Such a view is not St. Paul's, but it might be logically derived from certain of his utterances as to the opposition of grace and works, if we left out of account the idea so vividly expressed in the Epistle to the Romans—the idea of a Divine Spirit immanent in nature and man, a spirit that from the beginning to the end is groaning and travailing for the complete 'revelation of the sons of God,' *i.e.* for the complete realisation of the divine sonship of humanity.

In the second place, and connected with this, is the fact that in St. Paul's teaching there begins

[1] Rom. vii. 22.

a kind of separation of Christ from humanity and a kind of identification of him with God, which is practically a return to the Jewish opposition of God and man, and a denial of the distinctive title which Christ gave himself as the Son of Man. St. Paul, indeed, as we have seen, speaks of Christ as the "second man from heaven," and he insists upon his having come 'in the likeness of sinful flesh';[1] but he regards Christ's life in the flesh as an episode between a life in glory before his birth and a life in glory after his death, and thus takes him out of all the ordinary conditions of humanity. In this way he seems to deny that union between the human and the divine which was the essential lesson of the gospel of Jesus; and he gives occasion to all those theological puzzles about the unity of two natures in one person, in which the later theology of the church involved itself. For, as we have attempted to show, the essential basis of Christianity in human nature, the *anima naturaliter Christiana*, lies in this, that the consciousness of God is logically prior to, and presupposed in the consciousness of self and of the world; and that therefore man cannot be true to himself, cannot know what he really is, or realise the good he is capable of attaining, except in so far as he "sees himself in God," and regards himself

[1] Rom. viii. 3.

as the servant and organ of a divine purpose./ But this idea is partly lost, whenever simple humanity is divorced from the divine, or regarded as capable only of indirect union therewith. In St. Paul this consequence is not apparent, partly because he lived in the first fervour of Christian life, in which distinctions of abstract thought could not produce their full dividing effect; but still more because Christ is for him so completely identified with the principle manifested in and by Christ. Thus, refusing to know 'Christ after the flesh,'[1] St. Paul saves himself from the difficulty of conceiving him as one man among others; or he thinks of him as having left behind in the grave all such limitations, and so become identified with a Divine Spirit which is also the spirit of humanity. And we may fairly say that the gain of this view, in the emancipation of Christianity from its Jewish limitations, for the time more than counterbalanced the loss of the immediate realisation of Christ's humanity, which accompanied it. Without such a generalising and idealising process, the great mission to the heathen would not have been possible. Yet it was well that there were others, the original disciples, who could not, like St. Paul, forget 'Christ after the flesh'; though their Jewish prejudices no doubt kept them from being the instruments of the great expansion of the Church beyond the limits of

[1] 2 Cor. v. 16.

the chosen people, and they were therefore thrown into the background by that expansion. In a few generations those who thus clung to the tradition of the first disciples seemed to the rest of the church a heretical sect. But, while we must recognise that this was inevitable, we have always to remember that we are under a debt to this narrow Jewish church, which is greater even than our debt to St. Paul. For it did not pass away till it had gathered together those records of the earthly life of Jesus 'according to the flesh,' in the absence of which even the teaching of St. Paul would have become little better than an abstract dogma, without power to purify the souls of men by pity and terror, or to draw them out of themselves in a passion of self-sacrificing love.

LECTURE NINTH.

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN AND THE IDEA OF A DIVINE HUMANITY.

Relation of St. Paul's Theology to the Representation of the Life of Jesus in the Gospel of St. John—The Idealising Process that follows Death—That it is not necessarily a fictitious Process of Imagination—The Growing Powers of Man as best revealed in their Results beyond the Life of the Individual —That Christianity gives the Highest Example and Explains the Rationale of this Process—Sense in which Jesus was Unique —His Separation from Humanity due to Jewish Ideas—How far this appears in the New Testament—The Desire for a Miraculous Break in the Connexion of Experience in order to prove that the Ultimate Reality of Things is Spiritual—That Jesus did not rely on such an Argument.

In the last lecture, we considered the way in which St. Paul at once generalised and idealised the faith of Christ, liberating it from the Judaic conditions of its origin, and at the same time lifting it into the region of theology. For him the whole life of Christ became summed up in his death; and the story of his humanity was changed into the history of a divinely commissioned Messiah, who had re-

nounced the glories of his prenatal existence with God that he might endure all the pains and sorrows of man, and, by bearing the utmost force of evil which man can suffer or inflict, might emancipate man from it. For the resurrection of Christ, as St. Paul believed, had shown that the way of self-abnegation, and not the way of self-assertion, was the divinely-appointed way to glory and immortality. It had been made manifest in this transcendent example that he who empties himself of all selfish ambition, becomes filled with the power of a divine life; that he who gives up all, finds all again in God. Thus, as St. Paul maintained, through Christ's death a new principle has been introduced into humanity,—a principle which, in every one who has faith in Christ, will produce the same fruits as in him. We, indeed, cannot, like Christ, renounce heaven for earth, that we may save mankind; but none the less is it possible for us, through the new spiritual force that has come into man's life, to make the 'grand renunciation' of ourselves, and so to "fill up that which is behind in the afflictions of Christ"[1] to complete the salvation of men. And, when we do so, we feel within us the "earnest of the spirit," the sustaining and inspiring power of the same principle of life, which in him vanquished all the hate of man and rose

[1] Col. i. 24.

victorious over death itself; and we cannot but believe that in us it will produce the same effects in life and in death.

In this way we see that St. Paul combined two things which at first might seem irreconcilable. On the one hand, he generalised the lesson of the life and death of Jesus. He extracted from it a universal principle which was not confined to Jesus Christ, but might find new organs in every human soul. Or, to put it in another way, he recognised that in Christ was revealed the essential law of man's moral life, as drawing all its strength out of surrender to the divine Spirit, which is present in all men, in so far as in them the consciousness of self is bound up with the consciousness of God. Yet, at the same time, by his identification of Jesus as an individual with this principle, he prevented it from shrinking into an abstract dogma, and gave to it the living power of an image of perception or imagination.

And what St. Paul thus initiated, was still more fully worked out in the Gospel of St. John, in which the highest view of Jesus, as not only the Messiah but the 'Logos of God,' is brought into direct combination with the story of his earthly life; and, in which, on the other hand, the details of that life are consistently presented as the manifestation of the divine meaning of his personality.

St. John, or the writer of the Gospel attributed to St. John, thus completed that synthesis of the universal and the individual, to which Christianity owes so much of its power over the hearts of men. And when the same writer[1] speaks of that which "was from the beginning, which we have seen with our eyes, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life," he is uniting, with a clear consciousness of their startling contrast and antagonism, the utmost universality of the Christian idea—as a principle which embraces all the existence of man and of the universe—with the immediate personality of an individual, who is represented as living and acting under the ordinary conditions of human life. He was thus bringing together the two poles between which the spirit of man moves, as it is conscious of itself in its finitude in relation to the divine, and, therefore, conscious at the same time that the divine can be revealed in it.

What has now been said may be otherwise expressed thus: It is a law of human history that principles and tendencies which are really universal, should at first make their appearance in an individual form, as if bound up with the passing existence of a particular nation or even of a single man.

[1] If it is the same writer who wrote the First Epistle of St. John. In any case there can be no doubt that the Gospel and the Epistle are written in the same spirit.

The general idea needs, so to speak, to be embodied or incarnated, to be 'made flesh and to dwell among men' in all the fulness of realisation in a finite individuality, before it can be known and appreciated in its universal meaning. And it is only after such individual presentation has produced its effect that reflexion is able to detach the idea from accidents of time and place and circumstance, and present it as a general principle. Even in the case of philosophy itself—which, as it belongs to the reflective stage of consciousness, might seem independent of the personality of its teachers—the same law still partially holds good; for the greatest of all philosophical movements is associated with the life and death of Socrates, the first representative of the subjective principle of thought. Now, in this movement from the individual to the universal the great danger is that the idea should lose in intensity what it gains in generality; that, as it frees itself from local and temporal conditions, it should at the same time be deprived of that direct force of appeal to the souls of men which springs from its identification with an individual who is its organ and living embodiment. It is, therefore, of the highest importance that, in spite of the generalising process which necessarily begins so soon as the individual is removed and reflexion is at work upon his memory, the living

impression of the person should as much as possible be retained, and kept in union with the principle he has represented. Hence

> "Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
> Where truth in closest words shall fail,
> When truth embodied in a tale,
> Shall enter in at lowly doors."[1]

Thus, while the individual influence is very limited in its operation, and the bare universal is like a disembodied soul that has lost the power of action in the finite world, the individual who is regarded as the organ of a universal principle, the universal principle which has incarnated itself for perception or imagination in an individual life, take hold upon man by both sides of his nature, and work with irresistible transforming force upon all his thought and life. Now, it may fairly be said that St. Paul's Epistles and St. John's Gospel have together discharged this office for Christendom in relation to the life of Jesus Christ: the *former* freeing the idea of the crucified Messiah from the limitations of the Jewish environment in which it is presented by the Synoptic narrative, and the *latter* reinstating the ideal image of Christ thus reached, not indeed in all the special Jewish relations of its first expression, but at least in the general conditions of an actual human life. With St. Paul, Jesus has become ideal without ceas-

[1] *In Memoriam*, xxxvi.

ing to be real, because, just in the same measure as he is lost as an image without, as a 'Christ after the flesh,' he is restored as a 'quickening spirit' in the hearts of his followers. With St. John, the outward image of Christ after the flesh, is revived again, though only as 'Word made flesh,' the individualised manifestation of God in a humanity which is perfectly conformed to that which it has to express.[1]

Now this process of idealising the real, and again of realising the ideal, which we have thus just described, is not isolated, or unexampled in other spheres of human thought and life. If the spirit of Christ could not come to men till Christ after the flesh had departed, the same may be said in a measure of every human embodiment of excellence. The same psychological law renews its action in every great experience of loss or bereavement.

> "'Tis only as they spring to heaven that angels
> Reveal themselves to you: they sit all day
> Beside you, and lie down at night by you,
> Who care not for their presence—muse or sleep—
> And all at once they leave you, and you know them."[2]

In this sense it may be said that men never have full spiritual or ideal possession except of that

[1] Cf. Green's *Works*, vol. iii. p. 168 *seq.*, where this idea is developed with great force and clearness.

[2] Browning's *Paracelsus, Part Fifth.*

which has ceased to be empirically present to their senses. They cannot discern the 'word of life' in that which 'their eyes see and their hands are' actually 'handling.' They need the real to be removed to some distance, ere they can fully apprehend the ideal that is behind it. This does not mean, however, that they do not really discern but only imagine it. It is not that regretful memory exaggerates the virtues of the friend, who no longer is there to refute our idealism with the limitations of mortality. It is that the conditions of life half-conceal from us that which they half-reveal, and that the immediate perception of all the details of the moment obscures the meaning of the whole. And thus it is often death which first gives the right focus, from which alone each part can be seen in its proper proportion and relation to the others.

> "When he shall hear she died upon his words,
> The idea of her life shall sweetly creep
> Into his study of imagination,
> And every lovely organ of her life
> Shall come apparelled in more precious habit,
> More moving-delicate and full of life,
> Into the eye and prospect of his soul
> Than when she lived indeed."

It is only a grander illustration of the same law which we have in the great poem of the Middle Ages, the *Divina Commedia*, with its all but deification of the object of Dante's youthful love. By

the long brooding gaze of the poet's imagination the purity and simplicity of maidenhood, with its single-minded instinct for what is lovely and pure —all that Dante had loved in Beatrice—were gradually transformed into a symbol, and even an embodiment of the divine light that guides man through the confusions of life; and all the faults and weakness of mortality were lost in the vision of the "eternal womanly" which is ever "drawing us upward."[1] And this example suggests another thought, viz., that the qualities which we revere in men are *growing* powers, which have their value in their promise, and can only be fully understood by one who sees in them the future to which they point. They are undeveloped germs in which a finite form hides an infinite potentiality. And though, as life goes on, such hints may acquire more definiteness, yet the veil of human individuality is generally too dark to let us discover in what ways and in what measure the individual has become and is becoming one with his ideal. The imperfections of growth, and the limits of finite personality keep, so to speak, the human separated from the divine, till the idealising touch of death removes the division between them, and enables us to see in the man, our fellow, a new organ of the

[1] *Das ewig Weibliche*
Zieht uns hinan.

universal spirit of goodness. This revelation of the divine in the human is perhaps the highest use of sorrow, as it is the one thing which has plucked from many human hearts its bitterest sting. Hence it is no irreverence, still less is it any mere poetic exaggeration, copying the irrationality of human passion, which leads Tennyson to find his final consolation for the loss of his friend in all but dissolving his individuality in the divine. Though 'mixed with God and nature,' he declares, 'I seem to love thee more and more.'

> "Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
> Loved deeplier, darklier understood;
> Behold, I dream a dream of good,
> And mingle all the world with thee."[1]

Still more definitely is this felt in the case of a great original individuality who does not, so to speak, give us merely a casual glimpse of the divine through a life generally lived on the ordinary levels of mortality; but who, by the devotion of his whole existence to the realisation of the one idea that possesses him, initiates a new type of human character, and creates a new ideal of human excellence. Such men as Buddha, Socrates, and Luther, whose manhood and age are the fulfilment of an idea conceived in youth, and who treat their whole life, and even it may be their death, as the

[1] *In Memoriam*, cxxix.

clay in which the moral work of art is realised, can be seen truly only when faithfulness unto death has given as it were the last touch to their work. In such a consistent course of life what strikes us most is not this or that ray of excellence, nor even the completed course of progress, but rather the path of life which is traversed is to us as the path of a star to the astronomer, which enables him to prophesy its future course. Such men seem still to grow beyond the end which hides them from our eyes. The idea which, while they lived, was painfully seen through the personality it animated, now seems after their death to be freed from all obstacles and to go on developing, carrying their personality with it. Thus the great man in his lifetime stands before his contemporaries as an external image of excellence, which may, indeed, awaken a new spirit in those who are able even partially to appreciate it; but, when the outward presence is removed, the awakened spirit reproduces the inmost reality of the fact in an idealised vision which is truer than anything seen with the eyes of sense. For then, all the results that have sprung out of the living energy of the man, furnish us with new traits which enable us to realise more clearly what he was; and this new idealised image in turn reacts in further developments of the same spiritual energy which originally produced it.

It is only the greatest of all instances of this law of development which we see in the early history of Christianity. And it is this which explains at once the intensity of the religious life which Christ called forth, and the rapid expansion of the Christian community, so long as the strength of its first impulse was maintained. In the narrative which is at the basis of the Synoptic Gospels, in the idealising movement of St. Paul's Epistles, and, finally, in the effort of St. John to bring back the highest result of this process into connexion with the remembered facts of Christ's life, we see the expanding power of the idea of Christ: we see it as it flows out of his personality, and again as it reacts on the memory of the life from which it proceeds, at once deepening and widening the interpretation of it, and thus, so far as may be, raising the human in it into closer union with the divine. And if in this process the accurate lineaments of fact are in some degree lost or changed, yet in the main and with one important reservation, it is to be recognised that the change is only a sacrifice of the letter to the spirit. For the result is a more perfect combination of the real and the ideal, or, if the words are preferred, of the human and the divine, than ever has been reached in any other writings. The two terms are, indeed, stretched to the utmost point of their antagonism, and are shown in their utmost tension against each other; but

the religious imagination, the intuition of faith, is still able to hold them together, and, by doing so, it gains a kind of power which is possible only in such a union of opposite poles of the consciousness of humanity.

Thus the way in which, in the thought of the disciples, the ordinary limitations of finitude and humanity—of that in the finite world and in man which separates them from God—gradually drop away from the image of Christ, has in it something which, though unexampled in degree, yet agrees in kind with the ordinary process by which the ideal reveals itself in and through the real; or, to put it more accurately with the process by which the ideal reveals itself *as, the reality* which is hid beneath the immediate appearance of things. It may even be said that Christianity is distinguished from all other religions by the fact that it supplies the *rationale* and the justification of this process. For its fundamental lesson that man must 'die to live,' involves as a consequence that it is just through the last sacrifice of life itself that the divine principle of life in humanity reveals itself most clearly. In such complete devotion of himself, man becomes, what it is his innate vocation to be, the organ and manifestation of God. From this principle it necessarily follows that the idealising process which death sets on foot, and by which the individual is lifted out of the limitations of

mortality, is no mere visionary or poetic exaggeration, but only a recognition of the inmost truth of things. If life and death are the process whereby the image of God is realised in man, then there is no illusion in the correlative process by which, in the thought of those that come after, the history of a man is regarded as a stage in the manifestation of God. And, if it was the founder of Christianity who first realised in its full meaning the truth which we philosophically express by saying that the consciousness of God is presupposed and implied in the consciousness of the world, and even more directly in the consciousness of self—and that therefore a self-conscious being cannot know what he really is, or realise his good except in utter self-surrender to God—then there is a supreme reason why all generations of men should call *him* divine, not, indeed, as isolated from others, but as the "first-born of many brethren." By him, as by no other individual before, the pure idea of a divine humanity was apprehended and made into the great principle of life; and, consequently, in so far as that idea can be regarded as realised in an individual—and it was a necessity of feeling and imagination that it should be regarded as so realised—in no other could it find so pure an embodiment. Nay, we may add that, so long as it was regarded as embodied in him only in the same sense in which it flowed out from him to others, so

long the primacy attributed to Christ could not obscure the truth. It only furnished it with a typical expression, whereby the movement of the feelings and the imagination were kept in harmony with that of the intelligence.

Now this seems to be the ruling idea of the 17th chapter of St. John's Gospel, in which the principle of Christian mysticism receives its highest expression. The same divine life which manifests itself in Christ, it is there declared, is also communicated by him to all his followers. "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those that Thou hast given me, that they may be one *as* we are. . . . Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also that shall believe through their word, that they may all be one, *as* Thou Father art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us." Christ is thus proclaimed to be the unique revelation of God, but only as the first-born of many brethren, the greatest of all the servants of humanity, the most perfect organ of that divine life for which man was made, in as much as he was made in the image of God. In fact, it *was* through Jesus Christ that that capacity of men to become sons of God, which was in humanity from the first, was actualised or clearly revealed; and that, not merely in some casual voice of exalted religious feeling, or in the abstract conceptions of philosophy,

but as the ruling principle of a life lived under ordinary human conditions, and, above all, in the death which was its culmination, the death of the cross to which Jesus was "lifted up that he might draw all men to him."[1] For the cross, combining as it did the loftiest and the lowest things of human existence, the deepest outward shame and the manifestation of the highest energy of spiritual life to which the soul of man can rise, was the appropriate, and, we might even say, the *necessary* symbol of a religion which, in breaking down all the walls of division between man and man, class and class, nation and nation, at the same time awoke man, in all the weakness of his finitude, to a consciousness of unity with God.

Such an interpretation of the doctrine of the divine humanity of Jesus Christ may seem to many to take away that which is the necessary support of their faith. But I believe that, when fully considered and understood, it will be found to contain all the elements of vital Christianity, all the elements in it that have really given support to the religious life of man in the past. For the power of Christianity has *always* lain in its bringing Christ, at once, and in virtue of the same moral and spiritual characteristics, into unity with God and with man; and the theological doctrine of two natures in Christ

[1] John xii. 32.

which are the source of separate and even opposed attributes, has never found an echo in the voice of immediate religious experience. Read all the books of Christian devotion from the earliest to the latest, and you will find that what they dwell upon, when they are not merely repeating the words of the creeds but speaking in the language of religious experience, is that Christ is divine *just because* he is the most human of men, the man in whom the universal spirit of humanity has found its fullest expression; and that, on the other hand, he is the ideal or typical man, the Son of Man who reveals what is in humanity, *just because* he is the purest revelation of God in man. The divisions of theological logic, the dogmatic decrees of councils as to the nature of Christ, which set the human and the divine in him in opposition to each other, or only externally unite them, have never quite corresponded with the devotional language of the saints, *i.e.* with the language in which there is the purest utterance of the religious life. And even the history of dogma itself shows a continual reaction of that life against the distinctions of theology, and an ever-renewed effort to overcome them by new refinements and distinctions. In truth, the attempts of theology to raise Christ above the conditions of human life, and to give him a metaphysical or physical greatness of another kind, really end in

lowering him and depriving him of his true position in the religious life of man. For they obscure the one point in which he really is unique, as being the first to break through the Jewish division between the divine and the human, yet without falling into the gulf of an abstract pantheism, or losing any of that moral idealism in which the purifying power of monotheism lay.

Now Christianity, as it arose out of Judaism, had, so to speak, to pay tribute to Judaism. It had to express itself in the forms of the religion of Israel, and it could not avoid being to some extent influenced by those forms. Judaism, however, was specially distinguished by the way in which it separated God from the world and from all the creatures He has made, even from man; and, as a consequence of this, by the catastrophic or apocalyptic view which it took of the divine dealings with humanity. And this view was, as we saw, specially predominant at the time of Christ. In such a time the mind of the Jew could scarcely receive the idea of a moral regeneration of man's life, except as the accompaniment, or even the effect, of a sudden divine interference with the course of nature, by a Messiah who was exempted from all its laws. Now, I have already spoken of the way in which Jesus ran counter to the ordinary Messianic idea in almost all its characteristics, and I have pointed out that

his fate was the natural result of his doing so. But there is one point which has specially to be recalled here,[1] viz. that, while Jesus altogether rejects the demand of the Jews for an outward Messianic miracle, and maintains that the true victory of good must be that in which the natural is the effect and not the cause of the spiritual triumph, he also, as a necessary consequence of this, speaks of the process whereby such victory is to be attained as one not of catastrophic change, but of continuous growth. Hence it is not too much to say that in some of his words the idea that true progress is possible only by development, is more clearly expressed than it ever was by any one down to the present century, when it has become the key-note of all speculation. But in this, as in all his views of his own Messiahship, Christ was working against the whole prepossessions of his age and nation. His image is therefore seen by us through an atmosphere made obscure by ideas just the reverse of his own. And, just as he who refused to the Pharisees a sign from heaven was in a short time surrounded by an atmosphere of signs and wonders so he who compared the development of the kingdom of heaven to the slow growth of the seed by a silent unnoticeable process, "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear," was soon

[1] See above, p. 168 *seq.*

represented as having prophesied an immediate 'restitution of all things,' a miraculous revolution which, without any process of growth whatever, should, in a few years at the most, make Christianity triumphant over the earth. Even St. Paul, who of all the immediate followers of Christ entered most fully into the spiritual meaning of Christianity, did not dissociate it from such a belief. He sought, indeed, to free his creed from the external scaffolding of miracle which belonged to his original Jewish conceptions of Messianic agency; yet he admitted one transcendent miracle as the basis of his faith, and he expected another transcendent miracle to cut short the process—which must be slow and gradual, if it was to be really a spiritual process of development—and to bring in the final harvest of good within the space of a few years, and even within his own lifetime. And, while he taught in the most powerful way the lesson of Jesus, the lesson that self-sacrifice is the only way to self-realisation, he yet partly weakened its effect, as the simple exposition of the moral nature of man and the mode of his development, by making the sacrifice of Jesus essentially different from that which is the ordinary trial of humanity.

The truth seems to be that that transformation of religion which Jesus had in view, and by which the spiritual was put above and before the natural

and recognised as its source and principle, was only imperfectly carried out even in the mind of his noblest disciples. The old confusion that substituted for the spiritual a supernatural world—which was merely another natural world with external and sensible characteristics of the same kind though higher in degree—was by no means entirely dissipated. At least, if this confusion could no longer be *directly* made, still the spiritual was made to rest on, and derive its evidence from the supernatural. Thus miracles, signs and wonders, were mingled with the proof of a Gospel whose highest virtue lay just in this, that it turned men's eyes away from such outward breaches of nature's laws to the thought that in the ordinary course of things there is a divine principle realising itself, for him who looks deeper than the surface. And, on the other hand, the idealising process by which the deeper meaning of the life of Jesus as the manifestation of that principle was discovered, was neutralised in some measure by the tendency to make an absolute division between him and other men—a tendency much favoured by the lingering influence of the Jewish conception of the opposition between God and all the creatures He has made. No doubt, in the earliest years of Christianity, this Jewish monotheistic spirit was counteracted in its effects by the living consciousness of union with Christ, and through

him with God, as not only *his* Father but the Father of all men. But, in the following age, it gained continually greater predominance; and the conflict between it and the idea of the union of divine and human—an idea which could not but make its way wherever the record of the deeds and words of Christ was carried—led to ever-renewed controversy, which was rather silenced than satisfied by the dogmatic decisions of the councils of the church. For these decisions were nothing but continually renewed compromises between opposite elements of the orthodox faith, which could neither be neglected nor reconciled.

We may put it thus. It is the nature of the imagination to represent the spiritual as an enlarged natural world, a natural world with some of its limitations taken away. This is inevitable and necessary; for in no other way can imagination realise ideas than by giving to them the forms of the sensible, while yet emancipating them from some of the consequences which these forms carry with them. Nor does this necessity disappear when, as in the Jewish religion, the spiritual or divine is abruptly opposed to the natural: only, in this case, the natural symbol will be still farther emancipated from the conditions of nature, and its contrast with the objects subjected to these conditions will be still more strongly emphasised.

Miracle as such, as the triumph over nature, will thus become the sign of spiritual power, and faith will rise to the latter only on stepping-stones of the former. This was the attitude of the Jews who demanded of Christ signs and wonders, that they might believe in him. For them the higher revelation of love and forgiveness could be received, only if it was mediated by the exhibition of superhuman powers. Now, the early Church had so far risen above this that it regarded the wonder merely as a sign, and had learned to count that the highest kind of belief that did not need any sign. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." And yet the early Christians, like many in a later time, felt that bare faith in the spiritual was too much for them, a thing uncertain and subjective. The spiritual truth seemed a thing which they could hardly trust without some external warrant, some objective support or verification. Their faith called for some visible guarantee, some breaking of the divine through the clouds of heaven, some reversal, were it but for once[1] and in one individual case, of the common order

[1] Cf. Browning's *Parleyings with Certain People*—Bernard de Mandeville, p. 119.

"'No sign',—groaned he—
'No stirring of God's finger to denote
He wills that right should have supremacy
On earth, not wrong! How helpful could we quote

of nature, which should deliver them from the idea that that order is the ultimate reality of life, and that there is nothing beneath or beyond it. A sign from heaven seemed to them necessary, ere they could be convinced that the inmost meaning of the natural course of things is spiritual, or that God is actually present in His world. Above all, the apostles must be able to declare that they had seen with their eyes the vision of the risen Jesus, ere it could be believed that the spirit which was in him was stronger than death and the grave.

Even for St. Paul himself who, as I have said, had more than any other penetrated to the spiritual meaning of Christianity, the evidence of the Christian law of life through death, and the possibility of obeying it, rested on the believed fact of the resurrection of Christ, and especially on the vision of the living Christ which had been given to himself. But I do not think that for us it need rest on that basis. Whatever was the truth of these visions—and it is impossible for us to apply to

> But one poor instance when He interposed
> Promptly and surely and beyond mistake
> Between oppression and its victim, closed
> Accounts with sin for once, and bade us wake
> From our long dream that justice bears no sword,
> Or else forgets whereto its sharpness serves.'"

In a similar spirit Carlyle is said to have complained that 'God does nothing.'

them any of the tests of fact—it is not on such a foundation that we can base our faith in the Christian law of life and the Christian hope in death. In this respect we can appeal from St. Paul to Christ himself, who declares that those who do not believe when they "have Moses and the Prophets"; in other words, those who do not believe when they have the immediate evidence of the ethical and religious life of humanity, would not even "be persuaded though one rose from the dead."[1] The spiritual life is, or ought to be, its own evidence; and every secondary support that can be given to it, even if it were the visions of a St. Peter or a St. Paul, must prove treacherous. When Christ refutes the Sadducees, who refused to believe in a resurrection or a future life for man, it is not by an appeal to the miraculous, but by the declaration that the belief in a future life for man is involved in our consciousness of the existence of God. "As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read what was spoken to you by God, saying: I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead but of the living"; "for," as Luke adds, "all live unto Him."[2] This is the only properly re-

[1] Luke xvi. 31.

[2] Matt. xxii. 31, 32; Mark xii. 26, 27; Luke xx. 36-38.

ligious proof of immortality. All of us indeed, have at times a desire to be directly convinced of the reality of another life, and of a world in which those who are gone prolong their existence. And we naturally think that if 'one rose from the dead,' or if, in any other way, we could establish communication with that world or bring it into empirical connexion with this, we should find it easier to believe in the existence of a divine power which orders our lives with a view to the realisation of the highest good. The best answer to such a demand, however, is that such a belief would not be a *religious* belief, would not properly speaking be a belief in God at all. The religious man believes in a future life for himself and mankind, because he believes in God; he does not believe in God, because he believes in a future life or another world. The only *religious* proof of a future life is, in short, that "God is not the God of the dead but of the living"; *i.e.* as I understand it, the evidence for any destiny of man higher than that of other beings is that which springs out of the divine principle already manifested in his life here, and, we might even say, out of the fact that he possesses a consciousness of God. For in these words, as has been well said, "Christ does not proclaim resurrection; he denies death, and asserts the indestructibleness of all life

that remains in communion with God."[1] In this point of view, an over-anxious desire to prove the immortality of the soul is not by any means an evidence of a religious temper of mind. Indeed, the belief in immortality may easily become an unhealthy occupation with a future salvation, which prevents us from seeking for salvation for mankind here—unless it be that natural spring of confidence in its own supreme reality, that unbelief in death, which seems to be the necessary characteristic or concomitant of true spiritual life. If it be a consequence of the intellectual conditions under which we live in the present day, that the empirical evidences of a future life that seemed most sure and certain to our fathers, have for some of us lost their convincing power, this, in a religious point of view, may not be altogether a loss. It is possible even that the spiritual may gain all that the supernatural has lost.

[1] Reuss, I think ; but I have mislaid the reference.

The meaning of our life we use in the living.
It is left for those who love us to see the light we kindle.

LECTURE TENTH.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EVOLUTION OF CHRISTIANITY IN POST-APOSTOLIC TIMES.

That the New Testament contains all the Germinal Ideas of Christianity—Limitations of this Statement—Do Ideas necessarily lose their Purity in being Realised?—Why they seem to do so—How far Christianity is opposed to the Religion and Culture that existed before it—How far its Development is a Conquest, how far an Assimilation, of Foreign Elements—Its Struggle with Jewish and Greek Influences—In what sense Christianity is Original and Unique.

We have now dealt with the earliest development of Christianity as it is exhibited in the New Testament; and, therefore, with the formative process in which Christianity first showed its distinctive characteristics, and defined itself as a system against other systems of thought and life. For, though the development of Christian ideas and institutions did not cease with the completion of the New Testament writings, yet these, in a peculiar sense, determined the future direction of that development, and supplied for all after-times the criterion by which what is Christian was separated

from what is not Christian. On the other hand, almost all the elements which are found in the New Testament have shown themselves to be essential to the Christian life; and it is by their conflict and reconciliation that that life has been continually enriched and widened. Great as have been the changes through which the growing organism has passed, in contact with the ever-changing conditions of its environment, they have never carried it beyond the sphere of the original Christian idea, as it is expressed in the writings of its earliest apostles. Or, to put it perhaps more accurately, the idea so expressed has always been able to maintain itself against the influences that threatened it, and to turn them into the means of its farther development.

At the same time, this statement must not be taken in any narrow dogmatic sense. We cannot limit the man by the characteristics of the child, though we may recognise in the child an original energy, an assimilative force, which is able to react upon the environment, and to subdue it into a means for the development of its own life to the full stature and power of manhood. In like manner, we may recognise in the ethical and religious ideas of the New Testament, in the general view of the relations of men to each other and to God which is there given, the productive principle of the whole subsequent development of Christianity. But we cannot do so, if we insist on any literal and exact

correspondence with the first forms of Christian thought and life; nor if we refuse to leave room even for the complete decay of those forms and the rise of others in their place. If we look for such outward marks of that which is to be recognised as Christian, we shall soon lose the thread of continuity. For, as I pointed out in a former lecture,[1] development is not a superficial change, in a being which otherwise remains unchanged. What it presupposes is an identical principle of life, which is capable of maintaining itself through the transformation of every part of the organism it animates. The facts of development, therefore, are a continual perplexity to those who look for some external sign or manifestation of unity, which is unaltered and unalterable. Theologians have often interpreted the dictum of Vincent of Lerius, *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus,* in the sense that there was some 'form of sound words,' or some fundamental institution, to which the existence of Christianity was permanently attached. But every such criterion would inevitably break down in the face of the free action and reaction of historical development, and would exclude important forms of life which yet have manifestly sprung from the same living principle.

To give even the barest sketch of a process of this kind, involving so many and great ebbs and flows of

[1] Vol. I. p. 171 *seq.*

change, is obviously impossible within the space still left to me. All that I can hope to do is, in this lecture, to indicate the general nature of the development in question; and, in the two following lectures, to describe the leading features of the two main periods into which it may be divided.

We may begin by dealing with a plausible objection. Some writers, like Renan, are fond of the thesis that ideals necessarily become degraded when they are realised, like light passing through a cloudy medium. The pure vision of a prophet or saint arises in his soul only as he turns his back upon the miserable reality of life; and when he returns to the world again, and seeks to realise under the ordinary conditions of experience what he has seen in the moment of inspiration, he cannot prevent his idea from being subdued to the element in which it has to work. The injunction, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount," cannot be obeyed; for no earthly stone and lime can be built up into the perfect image of the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Hence the fate of great ideas is always that, in becoming efficient, they enter into impure combination with facts and become vulgarised; or that they get fixed and fossilised in dogmas, and lose their inspiring power; or, finally, that they become subordinated to the institutions which were at first meant

for their support. The idea creates the institution, and the institution crushes the idea. Thus, after a few generations, the steady *vis inertiae* of the world—the constant tendency of the natural understanding to misinterpret spiritual truth, and of the unregenerate will to substitute sensuous and selfish hopes for the desire of spiritual good—gradually drag down the idea to the level of the instruments it has to use, and the minds it has to inspire; until, at last, it may even become a matter of doubt whether mankind has gained anything from the new spiritual impulse it has received.

Now such a pessimistic view of things may be morbid and distorted, but there is a certain element of truth in it; as is proved by the history of Christianity and of every great movement that has affected the spiritual life of man. As in the natural world the seed has a fulness of life in it, which is found again only in the fruit; and as the first step toward development always involves a certain loss or dispersion of energy—a certain surrender to the modifying power of the environment, which cannot be overcome except by, in the first instance, yielding to it—so it is here. When a new principle begins to transform the life of humanity, it finds everything apparently alien and adverse to it. The whole order of social existence, the whole system of thought, seem to have been constructed upon

another basis. Custom, tradition, the prevailing tendencies of speculation, the main interests of action, all seem to be moving from a different starting-point, and towards a different goal. In such circumstances two results are bound, by an all but inevitable necessity, to follow. On the one side, the new principle becomes narrowed by antagonism, which forces it to show its negative and destructive rather than its positive and constructive side; and, on the other hand, in order to act effectively, the principle has in some degree to be brought down to the level of that which it seeks to change. It thus tends at once to exaggerate its opposition to the other tendencies of the time, and, in its contact with them, to lose some of the purity of its first expression. In fact, these two things, though apparently opposed, are closely connected with each other. For controversy is apt to narrow a principle, and to deprive it of the full riches of its meaning, just because it tends to reduce it to the mere negative of that to which it is opposed. In conflict with each other, men exaggerate their differences, and thereby make their own views more abstract and one-sided. Hence the high hopes of those who were the first preachers of a new truth become gradually extinguished in their successors, who, at the same time, lose the liberal and comprehensive spirit of the earlier time.

Such degradation of an expansive faith into a narrow dogmatism, of the spiritual enthusiasm excited by the infinite possibilities of a new principle into a bitter party spirit for a defined and rigid creed, is a process that has been so frequently exemplified in the history of the world, that it may be regarded as part of the normal course of things. And, in this point of view, it may be admitted that the progress of man is a continual disappointment. The ideal that seemed, to those who first apprehended it, certain to revolutionise the moral world, and transform the whole spiritual life of man into its own image, is found continually, as it were, to lose and disperse itself in the struggle with something in the nature of things that hinders, and that cannot be 'taken out of the way.'[1] And, what is worse, the ideal itself seems to shrink up in the hands of those who apply it, till it is little better than the reality it would transform. Hence, even if it conquers, its victory is not what its first advocates expected. What would Luther have said to the divided and dogma-ridden Protestantism of the seventeenth century? Or what would the early Christians have thought of the church of the Middle Ages? Would they have recognised in such a result the end for

[1] 2 Thess. ii. 7, "He who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way."

which they had hoped and laboured? Would they have owned it at all as that which they had been seeking? What they expected was both a completer and a speedier triumph. They expected that in a few short years the church would have overcome and transformed the world, and that the Messianic kingdom—the kingdom of heaven on earth—would have been set up. But, after twelve centuries, they would have found the opposition between the church and the world emphasised and hardened into an abstract antagonism; and the conquest of the latter by the former so far removed from the expectations of Christian men, that it had even become a fixed article of belief that the Christian ideal of their union could only be realised in heaven. The gospel word, 'The kingdom of God is amongst you, therefore realise it *here*,' becomes changed into what is almost its opposite, 'The kingdom of God is in heaven, therefore seek it *there*.'

If, however, it be said that the meaning of all this is simply that ideals never can be realised, or that what is anticipated by men in their hours of prophetic insight is 'too good to be true,' I think that an answer to such a view may be found in the idea of development, as that idea must be interpreted in relation to the history of man. Here there are especially two things which have to be taken into account. One is that no spiritual prin-

ciple is ever *so new*, and therefore so alien to its environment, as at first it appears to be. A new idea can only reveal itself in the fulness of time, as the result of a process of history which has been preparing the minds of men for its reception. Hence the character of the civilisation amid which it presents itself, can never be altogether unfavourable to it. It could not succeed at all, unless there was something in the spirit of the time which affected even its opponents and weakened their resistance. While, therefore, it is natural that the antagonism of the new principle to the ideas that rule the world into which it enters, should be at first exaggerated, both by its supporters and its opponents, into an absolute opposition, the opposition can never be really absolute; for, if it were absolute, the principle could not have presented itself to the mind of man at all; or if, *per impossibile*, it had presented itself to the mind of one man, he could have had no success in communicating it to others. Thus even Christianity, new as in a sense it was, was no idea suddenly launched into the world from heaven without any connexion with the previous process of human development. It was, and it presented itself as, a 'fulfilling' of the law, as an answer to the prophetic hopes of Israel, arising partly out of these very hopes themselves. It came to the Jews

only when their thoughts had been universalised, first, by the teaching of the prophets, and then by contact with the Persian and the Greek civilisations; and when finally, by the all-levelling power of Rome, they had been made to admit practically, if not theoretically, that no nation can be isolated from humanity. Christianity was simply the universal principle of religion, coming to self-consciousness in the nation which was ripest for the apprehension of it. Hence in its conflict with the exclusive patriotism and the still more exclusive religious prejudices of the Jews, it had the deepest spirit of the nation on its side. It was the just claim of Jesus Christ that, in order to accept his teaching, all that was necessary was to "discern the signs of the times"; as it was his reproach to the leaders of the Jewish nation that they, the wise and learned, did not discern them. Yet this blindness did not absolutely exclude all consciousness whatever. The very bitterness and exasperation with which the Scribes and Pharisees opposed and sought to crush the new doctrine was partly a result of that sense of weakness, which is inevitably felt by those who are fighting against the spirit of the time, and therefore, one may even say, against themselves.

In like manner, when Christianity went beyond the bounds of Judaea, it found, no doubt, in the

thought and life of Greece and Rome, many elements that repelled it and conflicted with it. But these elements were, as a rule, the remains of a worn-out civilisation, or, if not, they were elements not essentially hostile to Christianity. Classical antiquity had broken its idols before Christianity told it to throw them away. The whole tendency of thought for ages had been to throw down the physical and intellectual barriers between European nations, and even, finally, the still greater barrier between the imaginative intuition of the East and the logical reason of the West. Hence the alternate struggle and compromise between Christianity and the Jewish and Greek systems of thought, which was the first consequence of their contact, was not the indications of any hopeless incompatibility between them, but only the fermenting of the 'lump' under the action of the leaven that was to transform it. Fierce as was the conflict, it was one in which each of the adversaries might be said to be contending with itself as well as with its opponent; and in which, therefore, reconciliation was in the long run inevitable, so soon as the due relation of the interests on each side had been discovered.

And this leads me to say, in the second place, that in no such case, and especially not in this case, are we to regard the conflict of principles as one in which

all the truth is on one side; even though it be the case that on one side we have the principle of the future, and on the other, the principle of the past. Christianity, indeed, had in it the universal principle of religion, a principle which included all others, and to which no other could, strictly speaking, be opposed as a rival. And in the words of Jesus this principle seems to have found a simple and comprehensive expression in which room might be found for almost every modifying truth. Farther, we have seen that the whole movement of the life of Jesus, up to its culmination in his death, was such as to make it the most vivid of all possible symbols of the truth he taught. But, even admitting all this, it has to be observed that in the life and words of Jesus the truth was presented only in its principle, or, what is the same thing, in its moral and religious essence. Perhaps—if the word principle be taken in the sense of a universal law—we should rather say that it was not yet presented even in its principle, but rather as involved in an individual life, and identified therewith. Now, there is a long way between the intuitive perception of the truth as realised in and expressed by an individual, and the reflective appreciation of it as an idea which is related to other ideas. And there is a still longer way from such appreciation to the application or development of it as an organising principle, which transforms or new-moulds the whole order of human life. The

religious consciousness grasps the idea of God, so to speak, in its unevolved totality, and thinks that in that it has everything. It has a feeling or anticipative consciousness of the whole, *i.e.* not only of the principle but of all that can come out of it; and often this consciousness seems so rich in itself, that every step to definite thought or action, every step towards analysing the truth or drawing particular practical consequences from it, appears like a degradation of it. And, in a sense, it must *be* a degradation; for every such step takes men down from the first fulness of immediate vision and feeling into the region of conflict and controversy: nor is it possible for them by one single decisive effort to traverse the whole distance that separates the implicit fulness of the beginning from the explicit fulness of the end. But, on the other hand, though the beginning contains everything—in the sense that it is the germ of everything—and though for this reason Hegel could say that the immediate consciousness of the religious man has in its simplicity an infinite worth, because an infinite content, yet it has this in it *only* as an undeveloped potentiality. In this point of view we must regard the apparent degradation of which I have spoken as a real step in progress; we must recognise this temporary falling away from the completeness of the truth as necessary to the realisation of it; and we must even look upon the narrowing of a principle to a dogma, as part of the

process through which it has to show its power *as* a principle. For it is impossible that without this descent into the region of conflict and controversy, the principle can make its way into the life of the world and transform it. To be applied, it must be generalised; though, in being generalised, it is in danger of becoming abstract and lifeless. When generalised, it must be set against other principles; though in being so set, it necessarily becomes narrowed, because it presents itself as an alternative to that which it really includes and transcends. It must for a time put itself on the level of that against which it is contending; though this necessarily causes too great emphasis to be thrown on its negative aspect as against other principles, and too little on its positive relation to them. In all these ways, the development of a new religious idea seems to involve the gradual loss of it in the medium which it seeks to penetrate; and it is only when we look to the end that we can see that such loss is instrumental to a higher gain. Thus, as we have already seen, St. Paul, in trying to break the shell of Judaism within which Christianity at first concealed its universality, was led to stretch the antithesis between faith and works, between grace and the law, to a point at which he obscured the continuous development of the former out of the latter. And in doing so, he partially entangled himself in the web of rabbinical scholasticism,

and substituted a drama of abrupt contrast and startling catastrophe for the serene wisdom of the parables of the kingdom of heaven—the parables of the leaven, the mustard seed, and the tares and the wheat. But Christianity, if it was to absorb what was good in the Jewish system, must find in the armoury of Judaism itself the weapons with which to confute it.

Again, no sooner did Christianity break away from the Jewish form in which it was first expressed, than it was exposed to a new danger from the culture and philosophy of Greece. And some writers are inclined to maintain that here also, as in relation to Rome, the Greek genius ultimately vindicated its superiority and brought its victor into subjection to itself. In other words, it is maintained that the doctrinal forms of the theology of the early church owe more to the metaphysical systems of Plato and Aristotle, of the Stoics and the Neoplatonists, than to Jesus or St. Paul. And it must be acknowledged that there is a partial truth in such assertions. As Philo platonised Moses, so Origen and others may be said to have platonised, or neoplatonised the Gospel. The dualism, the asceticism, the transcendentalism if we may so call it, in which the later Greek philosophy sought refuge from a religion that deified nature, became confused with the Christian idea of self-sacrifice and the Christian

doctrine that it is through such sacrifice that God reveals Himself in man. Hence Christianity seemed for a time to lose hold of the positive relation of nature to spirit, and to identify itself—as against the impurities of heathenism and its direct recognition of human impulses as divine—with a philosophy which lost God in the absolute, and bade man cease to be human that he might become one with the divine. In other words, it seemed on Greek ground to adapt itself to a form prepared by Greek philosophy, and, in some degree, to become confused or identified with one of the two great tendencies between which Greek life was divided. And the influence of this neoplatonised Christianity was not a temporary phenomenon, but maintained itself through many ages. Indeed, in some respects we may say that its reign is not yet quite at an end.

At the same time, we have to remember two things: first, that it was impossible that Christianity should thoroughly overcome the dualism of Greek thought, until it had fully entered into it, and even masked itself in the appearance of one of the principles that combated within it. And secondly, that throughout the struggle, the idea of the ultimate unity of the human and the divine, of nature and spirit, was never wholly lost; though it was working, as it were, underground, and showed its influence rather as a check upon the extreme

developments of dualism and asceticism than as a positive principle on which the theory and practice of human life could be based. Of this I shall speak more fully hereafter: for the present I need only say, that the process whereby the antagonism which Christianity had to reconcile, was deepened till it became an all but absolute division, was not a needless one. On the contrary, it was essential, in order that that solution might be adequate and explicit, and that it might be brought into complete relation with the difficulty it had to meet. For Christianity, if it is the only religion that corresponds to the idea of religion, is just for that reason the most complex of all religions; and it therefore needs for its explication the longest and most painful process of development—a development which, in a way, reproduces all the struggles of previous religions with themselves and with each other. But this does not mean that in such struggles it wastes itself away, or becomes broken into fragments. It means, indeed, that in the course of its development its meaning as a whole, or the principle that underlies it, often seems for a time to be obscured and all but lost. But, as it is a religious idea which is bound up with the very constitution of the human mind—as indeed it is simply the idea of God which underlies all our consciousness of the objective world and of self—so

it never can be completely hidden from men, after it has once dawned upon them. As Emerson says:

> "One accent of the Holy Ghost
> The heedless world hath never lost."

Such an idea once uttered, as it was uttered by the founder of Christianity, cannot die out of the human mind: it remains in it as a persistent stimulating and modifying power, a brooding consciousness, which will not let men rest in any partial truth, but urges them constantly with a silent, unhasting but irresistible force, to the correction of their errors and the supplementing of their defective thoughts. It is only thus that the religious consciousness in all its complex content can be developed; only thus that it can break away from the imperfections of its germinal form and, by the conquest of all the different elements contained in it, can restore its original unity with itself, enriched by all the conflicts through which it has passed.

We may express this thought more briefly by saying that there are two periods in the history of an idea: one in which it shows itself as a tyrannical force that seeks to crush all rivals, and to substitute itself in their place; and another in which, secure of victory, it begins to make room for its former opponents within the domain it has conquered. And it may be added, that the really beneficent power of a great idea is not shown till

it has reached this second stage. If modern life has built and is building itself up on the basis of the Christian principle, yet that principle is no longer what it once was—an invasive force that offers to every other spiritual power the alternative of submission or extinction. During the long development of its doctrine, it was already making efforts to reconcile itself with Greek philosophy; and, both before and after the Renaissance it learned to accept the aids of art and humane letters. It admitted at the Reformation that its sway must be exercised through the freedom, and not through the slavery, of the intelligence of man; and, as a necessary consequence, it has ever since been gradually learning, in politics and literature, in science and philosophy, to allow free play to many forces which, throughout the Middle Ages, were kept in leading strings. Its universality has been shown in the past, and must be shown still more in the future, by its being able to reproduce, as grafts on the new stem, all the forms of human development that were fostered by the civilisation of the ancient world, and to bring them to a higher perfection than they reached in their independent state. But, no doubt, in order to achieve this end, it has had to emancipate itself, and will have still further to emancipate itself, from every element that is not essential to it; and especially to get rid of the

narrowness and the dogmatism into which it was driven at the time when it was struggling for its existence with the imperial despotism of Rome, with the invasive culture of Greece, and with the anarchy of barbarism.

The general result of the preceding remarks is that the broken, wayward, and often apparently reactionary course of the history of the Christian church, is not inconsistent with its being a real movement of progress. Christianity, as intuitively presented in the life and words of Jesus, and as elevated to the form of reflexion by St. Paul, contains in itself a religious idea whose compass and meaning is no less than infinite. It is indeed the principle underlying all religion which in it comes to self-consciousness. Yet, on the other hand, it has to be admitted that this principle was as yet only stated in the most general way, and not worked out to its consequences. In spite of the force and fulness of expression which the Christian idea had attained in the New Testament, it still, in the apostolic age, remained to a great extent undeveloped. It could not yet be seen what changes would come of its application to all the various interests of the intellectual and moral life of man. It was only a germ thrown into an alien world, which it had to conquer and transform. Or, to express the same thing in other words, it was still merely a religion, and not

yet an ethics and a politics, an art and a philosophy. And the process by which it was to take possession of all departments of man's life, must necessarily be a very gradual and difficult one. For the application of a great principle to human life is never a simple analytic movement of thought from premises to conclusion; but always a very complex process of growth, involving a constant struggle with the environment, and an assimilation of fresh materials from it. And this, of course, must lead to the progressive discovery of new meanings in the principle itself, meanings which could not have been understood by those who first received it.

Hence, while in one point of view we may call Christianity the *absolute religion*, in another point of view, the absolute religion was only prefigured in it, at least in the form in which it appears in the New Testament. The first century only brought mankind in sight of a goal, which it required and requires all the long process of history to reach. At first, for the immediate disciple of Jesus, the Christian religion was simply the growing consciousness of a new form of spiritual life typically presented in his master,—a consciousness which became clear and definite only when the type was completed by the death of the individual in whom it was embodied. By St. Paul the new idea was partially

liberated from its first form, as loyalty to an individual human teacher; it became devotion to a risen Christ, who was lifted above all the limits of mortality. But the universalising and idealising effort of St. Paul and St. John, which first showed that Christianity contained a universal gospel for Jew and Gentile alike, was but the beginning of a long process of development, in the course of which Christianity was brought into contact and conflict with all the elements of the earlier civilisations of the world. And it was only by mastering and penetrating all these elements, and finally by absorbing them all into itself, that it could approve its claims to supremacy to be just. Or, looking at it from the other side, we may say that it was only by reconciling itself with these extraneous influences that it could pass beyond the inevitable one-sidedness of its beginning, and become truly a universal religion. For a principle cannot show itself to be universal, so long as it stands in opposition to any other principle, and does not find room for that other in its own domain. Thus the progress which, from one point of view, was the triumph of Christianity over other systems, may, in another point of view, be regarded as *their* triumph over the imperfect form in which *it* first realised or expressed itself. It is only in so far as we can recognise that, out of all these conflicts,

Christianity has returned upon itself, and reproduced in its ripened form the simplicity, the naturalness, and the comprehensiveness of the spirit of Jesus, that we can truly speak of it as the universal religion. And this might also be described as the merging of the special stream of Christian development in the great current of human progress. If, therefore, the history of Christianity is the proof of its divine authority, it is so only in the sense that 'nothing human is alien to it'; and that, therefore, it is able to rise again to a wider life by means of the very development of human thought which has been fatal to its special dogmatic claims.

And this leads me to say, finally, that the absoluteness or uniqueness of the Christian religion can lie in nothing but just this, that its appearance constitutes the most important and decisive crisis in the history of the religious consciousness of man, the culmination of ancient and the beginning of what we call modern history. For the great division we usually make between these two periods rests entirely on the supposition that the advent of Christ is a critical turning-point in history, beside which no other can be placed. And it *was* such a critical turning-point, just because in it man rose to an idea of himself and of his world toward which all the movement of the ancient world had been converging, and from which all the modern world has

started. Yet this 'uniqueness' of Christianity can only be, if we may use the expression, a *relative uniqueness.* For not only is it the case that to every age its own crisis necessarily *seems* the decisive one, but in a sense every such crisis *is* unique, unlike every other in the whole course of history. The development of man is one continuous process, by which he is brought to a consciousness of the world, of himself, and of God, and every step in that process is equally essential to the ultimate result. Thus the idea of development explains the preponderating claim of Christianity as the principal factor in man's religious life; but, at the same time, it makes us understand what is meant by St. Paul's admission that there is a limit to it as to all the other claims, and that even Christ must "deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father," that "God may be all in all."[1]

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28.

LECTURE ELEVENTH.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIANITY BEFORE THE REFORMATION.

Contrast of the periods before and after the Reformation—Their Respective Relations to the Christianity of the New Testament—The Revival of the Tendencies of Objective Religion—Tendency to Abstraction in Theory and Asceticism in Practice in the Early Church—Influences of Jewish and Greek Thought upon it—How far the Church resisted them—Effect of the Invasion of the Empire by the Barbarians—Modification of the System of Implicit Faith by Scholastic Philosophy—Reactive Power of the Christian Idea of Reconciliation—Mysticism as an Escape from Rationalistic Dogmatism.

In the preceding lecture I have indicated in what way the Christian principle develops, and it remains very shortly to illustrate what I have said, by a general sketch of that development. Even to the most superficial view the history of Christianity breaks into two great periods: the period before, and the period after the Reformation, which are distinguished by characteristics so markedly opposed to each other, that it is difficult at first to re-

cognise them as stages in one development. The Pre-Reformation period is one of concentration, while the Post-Reformation period seems to be rather one of dispersion. In the former, the Church builds itself up into a monarchy on the type of the imperial power of Rome, with a strict organisation which extends to almost every sphere of human life and thought. In the latter, this organisation is shattered; nor do the small organisations which rise out of its ruins ever gain the same power and authority over the individual which was possessed by the old system. In the earlier period, the principle of faith successfully resists the shock of Greek philosophy, and reduces it to an *ancilla fidei*, an instrument for the definition or systematising of Christian doctrine. In the later period, philosophy, science, and even religion, break away from the leading-strings of the Church; the intelligence claims the right of criticising every dogma and tradition of Christianity, and of refusing it any credit except on the ground of its rationality. In the former, Christianity manifests its power by the creation of an ascetic discipline, whose aim seems to be to crush every secular ambition and desire, to repudiate every claim of individual right, and to bring all the thought and action of man into subjection to a divine law imposed upon him from without. In the latter, the

current flows with equal steadiness in the direction of liberty; and Christianity is invoked as supporting the claims of the nation, the family, and the individual, and sanctioning the development of every natural tendency and sentiment. In short, the earlier time is one of repression, in which nature is mortified in the interest of spirit; whereas the later time is one of expansion, in which spirit is reconciled with nature, and is even regarded as finding in the natural life its only healthy manifestation. So great, indeed, is the contrast, that many have had difficulty in conceiving them as stages in the evolution of one principle; rather, they have been disposed to regard the earlier period as that which alone could be characterised as distinctively Christian, and to treat the later period as one in which the Christian Church was passing through the various stages of its inevitable dissolution.

Such a view, however, may be shown to be erroneous, by a comparison of the ideas of the New Testament, and especially of the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul, with the prevailing tendencies of the mediæval and the modern periods respectively. For such a comparison makes it obvious that there are elements in the original records of Christianity, which were obscured or thrown into the background in the course of the development of the Greek and Latin churches, and

which only regain their original place in modern life and thought. The freedom and fulness of the religion of Christ, its proclamation of the kingdom of heaven as that which is to be immediately realised, nay, which is already realising itself on earth, contrasts vividly with the mediæval concentration of thought upon another world and its all but despairing tone in regard to this world. And St. Paul's appeal to conscience and intelligence, and his effort to theorise the whole movement of history, as the progressive self-revelation of God to and in man, contrast both in method and in matter with the teaching of the scholastic doctors, who demanded implicit faith and obedience as the first condition of the Christian life, and who viewed the earthly existence of man simply as an exile in a foreign land, and the history of the Church as little more than the account of his rescue from it.

Looking at these and other related points, it may fairly be said that modern thought and modern life have shown themselves capable of taking up and developing elements of early Christianity which were almost lost sight of in the Middle Ages. Hence it was not altogether without justification that the Reformers asserted that they were really restorers of the Gospel of St. Paul and the Apostles. And *we* should not be without warrant in saying that men are only now, in the present age, returning

from the many mazes of an ecclesiastical religion and a scholastic theology to the simplicity of the original teaching of Jesus. At least, it can scarcely be denied that we are now learning to connect the worship of God and the service of man in a more direct way than religion has ever connected them, since the time when Christ first preached the 'Galilean Gospel' of the kingdom of heaven upon earth. And I may add, perhaps, that modern philosophy has brought us in sight of a theoretical development of the practical idealism of Jesus, and has shown us, in a way that was not possible in any previous time, the rationality of an ideal or optimistic system of thought, not built on the neglect of experience and science, but on a deeper reflective analysis of them both.

Now the only rational explanation of such a return of the end upon the beginning is that which is derived from the idea of development. We may rightly enough speak of the *simplicity* of the gospel, in so far as there is a transparent unity and self-consistency in the words and deeds of Jesus, and even in the Pauline theology developed out of them. But this simplicity is not that of a single indivisible element or a single abstract idea; but rather that of a fertile and comprehensive principle, in which an immense and complex world of relations is gathered to one centre, and so made luminous and transparent.

For, if there is any truth in the view given in the previous lectures, Christianity is the product of a *συντέλεια τῶν αἰώνων*,—the gathered and summed up result of the whole previous process of religious development; and, in particular, it is a new religion which combines and transcends the objective and the subjective types of religion, because it rises to a point of view from which their different forms can be at once appreciated and seen to be inadequate to the idea of religion. But if this be the case, then the unity so reached must be the complex unity of a seed which, being in itself the result of a long process of evolution, contains within it a great potentiality of differences, and which can be developed farther only as these differences are brought to light and overcome. Hence, while in the Christian Church the reconciling principle is never wholly lost sight of, yet its history appears to be a reproduction of all those conflicts of objective and subjective religion which prepared the way for the advent of Christianity. These tendencies, indeed, can no longer appear in the bare and exclusive forms, under which they presented themselves in previous religions; but they often strain against the limit which Christianity has imposed upon them. Thus the period before the Reformation may be described as predominantly objective, and the period after it as predominantly subjective. In other words, the former

tended to develop those elements in Christianity which are kindred with polytheism, and the latter those that are kindred with the Judaic monotheism. Or, again, taking our stand upon the ethical maxim of Christianity, "Die to live," we might say that, though no part of the lesson was ever entirely lost sight of, yet in all the earlier period the emphasis was laid upon the word, 'Die,' and in the later period upon the word, 'Live.' And we might connect these different ways of characterising the two periods by pointing out, that the predominantly objective conceptions of the earlier period naturally led to a religion and an ethics which carried to the furthest point that is possible without altogether abandoning the principle of Christianity; the suppression of the human and the natural; while, just in so far as men began to realise that the process of the divine life was not merely an objective process revealed *to* them, but a subjective process realised *in* them, the ethics of modern life has become a positive ethics, and its religion a religion of freedom. In what remains of this lecture I must content myself with a very general description of the first of the two stages, as exhibiting one of the two great elements or tendencies which are brought to a unity in Christianity.

If the 'points of light' in the world's history are those in which the ideal and the real, as it were, join

hands over the gulf of their utmost antagonism, the dawn of Christianity is undoubtedly the most important of these points. The calm faith in good as the beginning and the end of all, and in a Father in heaven realising His kingdom on earth, with which Jesus Christ faced the world, is the high-water mark of religious intuition. In his words we have the most powerful, because the most tranquil assertion of the *is* beneath the *ought to be*—an assertion made by one who certainly did not blink the evils of the world, but saw into their inmost nature and source. But such intuitive force of vision, which sees the evil yet sees the good through it, and which thus combines sanity with the highest idealism, is hard to maintain. Even with the immediate disciples of Jesus the 'is' soon shrinks into a 'will be.' Jesus Christ has gone, and his second advent, though anticipated in the immediate future, is delayed. And soon men, unable to see the signs of his presence in the world, begin to say, 'Where is the promise of his coming?'[1] The natural common-sense dualism of heaven and earth begins to re-establish itself, and faith becomes more and more a power of giving 'substance to things hoped for,' and less and less a present realisation of God in the world. We may compare this gradual lowering of the tone of faith, as it wastes, or seems to waste, its energy against the

[1] 2 Peter iii. 3.

resistance of men and things, to Wordsworth's picture in the *Ode on Immortality*, of the way in which man gradually loses hold of the recollections of the 'heaven' that 'lies about him in his infancy'—

> "Shades of the prison-house begin to close
> Upon the growing boy . . . .
> The Youth, who daily farther from the east
> Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
> And by the vision splendid
> Is on his way attended;
> At length the Man perceives it die away,
> And fade into the light of common day."

The intense ardours of the early Church, which had just lost its Lord, and instantly expected him to return, pass into a longing aspiration for which the end seems ever to become farther removed; till, finally, the Church returns to the old lament of Jewish exile, and comes to regard the world as a foreign country, a place of weary travel and sorrow, where the soul can never expect to find a home. "We are strangers and sojourners as all our fathers were, and the *patria*, the native land of the Christian, is beyond the grave:" —this is the constant voice of the piety of the Middle Ages. In an outward sense, the Church, during this period of its history, is gaining continual victories over the world. With Constantine, it wins the State as its ally; and though, in the period after Constantine, the Roman empire soon begins to crumble into ruins before the attacks of the barbarians, yet the Church

seems only to be lifted up to more secure dominion by the collapse of its only powerful rival for universal dominion. Still, all this outward success never seems to give it greater confidence in itself, or to raise within it the hope of making the world its own, and establishing the kingdom of heaven on earth. On the contrary, every step towards outward victory seems to make it more hopeless of any real union of the spirit of Christianity with the secular life and the worldly interests of man. And, if the belief in the possibility of a reconciliation of the natural and the spiritual cannot altogether be lost—since such a belief is of the very essence of Christianity—yet any attempt to reconcile the two on this side of the grave is regarded as involving an unworthy compromise. Practically and immediately the Church's view of the world is pessimistic, though it holds in reserve an optimism which deprives sorrow of almost all its bitterness.

That in this way the greatest effort that practical idealism has ever made to blend together the higher and the lower elements in human existence, should result in a dualism which touches the border of Manichaeism; that Christianity, whose fundamental thought is the union of the divine and the human, should lead to disunion and antagonism in every sphere of man's life, theoretical and practical,—should set faith against reason, theology against science and

philosophy, the Church against the world, the secular against the religious life,—seems at first to involve an almost insoluble problem. But we find it not difficult to solve, when we consider, on the one hand, the influences to which the Christian Church in its history was subjected, and, on the other hand, the nature of the principle of Christianity itself and the necessary order of the development of the different elements involved in it.

Looking at it in the former of these aspects, we can see that there were two great influences, both of which were continually acting upon the Christian faith in the early stages of its development, and both of which worked in the direction of dualism. These were the Judaic view of the division between God and His creatures, and the Platonic or Neoplatonic conception of the opposition of the ideal to the material world. Already, at the very beginning of the Christian era, these two influences had been fused together by the Alexandrian school of Philo, who read Platonism into the Old Testament, and, on the other hand, reinforced the Platonic antithesis of the intelligible to the sensible, by the Jewish conception of the opposition of the Creator to all the things He has made. Christianity had brought the idea of reconciliation into the atmosphere of a dualistic theosophy, in whose language it had to express and develop its doctrines; and it was impossible that the expression should not react on the

ideas expressed. Even in St. Paul's antithetic method of exhibiting his thought, by setting flesh and spirit, the natural and the spiritual, the Law and the Gospel, in contrast with each other, we are sensible of a certain conflict between the matter and the form in which it is presented. The lines of division seem to be so firmly drawn, that the unity of the terms is not wholly recovered; though St. Paul does attempt to recover it by means of the idea of a providential process of history, in which the higher is viewed as being developed out of the lower. Thus the natural is declared to be the seed out of which the spiritual springs; and the Law is exhibited not as a rival but as a necessary preparation for the Gospel. In the subsequent development of doctrine, however, this reconciling thought is all but lost. The Christian Gnostics adopted and even exaggerated the Platonic idea of the impurity of matter; and, as a necessary consequence, they were obliged to construe the Christian reconciliation of man with God, not as a transformation of the natural by the spiritual, but as the rescue of the spiritual part, or the spiritual class, of men out of the darkness and slavery of the natural world. In their view, therefore, Christ, the deliverer, was a purely spiritual being, who made a descent into the region of matter, and took on him the semblance of humanity, that he might annul the power of sense and matter over all those who

had in them anything kindred with the divine. This Gnostic theory, indeed, was, after a severe struggle, rejected and condemned as heretical. The Church succeeded in repelling the Docetic heresy, and in asserting against it the reality of Christ's humanity. But while it did so, it yet became infected with the spirit of the doctrine it rejected, so as still farther to divide Christ from all other men, and to recall the Jewish idea of the transcendence of God. Christ was raised into even closer union with the divine, but not in such a way as to 'draw all men after him.' Theology, as it developed, became changed into a transcendent theory of the inner nature of God, and ceased to be one with philosophy. For philosophy, in its endeavour to reach a first principle, is not seeking to realise the idea of a Being who is removed from all experience, but simply to determine the nature of that principle of unity which is presupposed in all our consciousness of the world without and of the self within us. But the theology of the fourth and fifth centuries did not seek such an ultimate explanation of the experience of man; rather, like Neoplatonism, it devoted itself to the definition of God as a Being who is beyond the reach alike of sense and of intelligence, and who is revealed, if He can be said to be revealed to us at all, entirely as a fact presented *ab extra*. Hence also the acceptance of such a revelation must be purely a matter of *faith*—under which word

is ambiguously indicated a process which is either *below* or *above* reason—below it, in so far as it is the reception of an external tradition from the hands of the Church; above it, in so far as this external reception is supposed to lead to an immediate spiritual appropriation of the truth, of which no rational explanation can be given. The theology of the Church thus carries the content of Christianity out of the region of reason and experience, and exhibits the connexion of its elements as if it were a relation of Platonic, or rather Neoplatonic ideas, in a region altogether separated from the natural world—a region into which man can rise only by the renunciation of all the light of experience and even of thought. The effect of this attitude of spirit might be put otherwise by saying that, in formulating its theology, the Church, indeed, expressed *in the abstract* the Christian view of the union of the spiritual with the natural, of the divine with the human; but that it separated the abstract idea so determined, from any immediate application to human life and to the world in which man actually lives. For to give a theory of the differences in the nature of the Divine Being *ab intra*, which is not at the same time recognised as a theory of his relations to the world, is as if one should try to explain a principle without any reference to that of which it is the principle. In this way, the very doctrine of unity and reconciliation becomes

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itself the parent of a new dualism; and the revelation of God, as reconciling the world to Himself, is made into a mystery, which, as it cannot itself be rationally explained, cannot cast light upon anything else.

This tendency to make the Gospel into a mystery, which has to be received on authority by an implicit or uncritical faith, was greatly exaggerated by the fall of the Roman Empire under the attacks of the uncivilised races who invaded it. These races were easily converted; for the vague superstitions, in which they had previously believed, could offer no serious resistance to the systematic spiritualism and organised ritual of the Church. But to the barbarians conversion meant an absolute intellectual surrender, in which they "burnt what they had adored, and adored what they had burnt." It had not been so with the earliest recipients of the Christian faith. The Greeks and the Romans, when they were converted, were not overpowered and enslaved by the new religion. For, although Christianity might transform their lives, they were not previously altogether strangers to the things of the spiritual world; nor could they receive the teaching of the Church without bringing it into relation with the elements of their previous culture. It, therefore, necessarily awakened in their minds many questions, which they tried to answer by means of the philosophical ideas which they brought with them. It was, indeed, just this

effort of theirs to bring the new matter under the old forms of thought, which gave rise to the development of Christian doctrine in the first five centuries. After this period, however, all such development ceases. The barbarous tribes, who had invaded and in great measure conquered the empire, brought with them no system of ideas which they could compare with the new light presented to them by the Church. They had to receive what was set before them in implicit faith, if they received it at all. Their rude spirits could obey or rebel, but they could not criticise. Hence their reactive influence upon the doctrine, in the first instance at least, was entirely in the direction of externalising it, and depriving it still farther of any relation to the life and experience of man. In fact, for them the speculative side of Christian doctrine could scarcely be said to exist: it was thought of, rather, as a special secret of the clergy with which the laity had little or nothing to do. And even the clergy themselves learned more and more to treat it, not as a key to the difficulties of life, but simply as news of another world which was altogether separated from this, and which nothing in this world could help them to understand. So much was this the case, that when at last, in the rise of Scholastic Philosophy, awakening intelligence began to react on the data of faith, it treated these data wholly as externally given facts, which thought might

be allowed to arrange and systematise, but which it could in nowise criticise or explain. The premises were supposed to be entirely derived from an external tradition, and all that was left for the intelligence was to accept them, and deduce conclusions from them.

It was natural that this tendency to make theology a mystery should go along with a development of morality in a negative or ascetic direction. For, just in proportion as the divine is separated from the human, and the Christian conception of their unity loses its direct relation to life, salvation gets to be conceived as a deliverance of man from the world, and not as a deliverance of the world from itself, or as the realisation of the divine spirit in it. The idea that the natural is essentially impure, and that the ideal life is, so far as possible, to escape from it, is the necessary result of a religious doctrine that breaks the bond between God and His creatures. And another inevitable result is the creation of a double morality, for the world and the Church respectively—a lower morality for those who are not able to break away from the impure ties of earthly affection, and a higher morality for those who are capable of such a sacrifice. Thus the different classes in the social body, and even the different elements in the nature of the individual man, were set in opposition to each other, and that in the name of the very doctrine of reconciliation.

The religion that first proclaimed the essential equality of men, as all alike capable of becoming kings and priests unto God, was turned into the support of a powerful ecclesiastical aristocracy, which held in its own hands the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and kept for itself the sole right to scrutinise its mysteries, and to enjoy its highest spiritual consolations. The Gospel ceased to be preached as the opening up of truth which everyone could appreciate and test by his own inner experience, and became like news of a far country given to those who could not visit it and verify the statements made to them. Divine service ceased to be the expression of the religious life of the people, and became an *opus operatum* performed by the priest for the laity. And even for the clergy themselves, whose life was supposed to become more pure, only because they had more thoroughly mortified nature in themselves, the superiority thus gained was robbed of its value; for they were enslaved in will and intelligence in virtue of the same principle which gave them the right to enslave others. Their life in this world was regarded as higher than that of others, only because they were more completely given up to the task of preparing for another world; only because they had, so to speak, made once for all the 'grand renunciation,' and did not wait to be forced to surrender their life bit by bit. Thus they, like

others, had to live in preparation not in realisation; in hope and aspiration not in fruition. It is not, perhaps, too much to say with Hegel that throughout the Middle Ages the world of the living was a mere forecourt or anteroom to the greater world of the dead, and that the worth of all human things, both in the knowledge and the use of them, was estimated entirely by their reference to that other world. Dante's Divine Comedy, in which the life of man is represented only under the figure of a pilgrimage through Hell, Purgatory and Paradise, was the natural expression of the spirit of an age which could see the great interests of life in their true proportion, only when it viewed them as refracted back, in an idealised and magnified image, from another world. In Goethe's allegorical *Tale* we are told that the giant shadow, who represents superstition, or a religion with which much superstition is mingled, had power in the hour of twilight to lift material objects with his spectral hands. The Middle Age was, as it were, the twilight hour of the world's history, in which the vision of another world was more powerful to move the spirit of man than all the immediate interests of his life on earth.

Yet, while all this is true, we must remember that there is a limit to its truth. Dualism and asceticism, a worship of outward ceremony, and a creed which took the form of a mystery accepted

in implicit faith,—all these things might establish themselves under the shadow of Christianity, but under that shadow they could not but have their results modified and controlled by a higher principle. It was possible to give a dualistic form to a religion whose central idea was reconciliation, but it was inevitable that the matter should always be reacting against the form, and should ultimately prevail over it. The idea of a divine humanity may be turned into a mystery, but it is really and in its essence a revelation that puts an end to all mystery; for it involves that man has within him the divine principle, in relation to which all things must ultimately be explained.[1] Hence the inner significance of the Christian doctrine was in conflict with the mode of its reception in implicit faith. As it contained in itself the very principle of freedom, it must ere long awake those who accepted it to scrutinise its own claims, and to cast off the authority of its teachers. To the "I believe" of Christian antiquity, the Scholastic Philosophy was obliged to add, "in order that I may understand"; and understanding, when once awakened, could not confine

[1] "The acknowledgment of God in Christ,
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
All questions in the earth and out of it,
And has so far advanced thee to be wise."
Browning's *Death in the Desert.*

itself to a process of reasoning from given premises, without any examination of the premises themselves.

Again, however far the Church went in the separation of the natural and the spiritual, the idea that the division could, and, indeed, must be healed, was always kept in reserve; and the negative process of abstraction and asceticism was always regarded as leading to a higher positive. Thus, even in the period when the Church was yielding most to the tendency to separate Christ from all other men, it recoiled against the Docetism that reduced his human life to a semblance; and St. Augustine, who of all the Fathers of the Church went farthest in the direction of pessimism and asceticism, yet utterly rejected the doctrine that matter, or any other substantial existence, is essentially evil, and maintained that evil is to be regarded only as a defect or negative accident which cannot subsist by itself. In other words, however deep and dark in his eyes were the antagonisms of life—and few have gone so far to fathom them as St. Augustine—he could not, as a Christian, admit that they are incapable of reconciliation. He could not believe in the substantiality of evil, but must hold that there is a point of view from which it disappears, or appears only as an instrument, or transitionary stage to higher good. And this doctrine, when fully developed, must carry with it the consequence that

there is no element in nature—no material principle in the outward world, and no power of sense or passion within man—which has to be crushed or expelled, and none even which cannot be converted into an organ of good. Nature and spirit are not absolute foes but predestined friends, whose existence must remain incomplete until atonement has been made between them. The utmost dualistic tendency, which is possible within Christian limits, can only delay the moment of reconciliation. But, however the process of purification, through which sense and passion must go, may be intensified and lengthened, the end must be that natural affection should become worthy to be the organ and expression of spiritual life. The very superstitions of the Church, its Mariolatry and Saint-worship, point in this direction. For they came in only to bridge over the gulf between the human and the divine, which was no longer filled by the idealised Christ of theology.

It is this persistent faith in a unity beyond the difference, even when the difference is stretched to the utmost, that gives to the ascetic piety of mediæval Catholicism that peculiar tone of tenderness and gentleness, that penetrating charm and attraction, whereby sorrow itself is made beautiful, and the fountain of tears is turned into a mirror of the divine image. Asceticism based on dualism is of necessity harsh and unlovely, and it is apt

to become as merciless to others as it is to itself. But the asceticism that renounces nature in order to purify it, that gives up father and mother and wife and child, and mortifies all the natural affections of which they are the objects, in order that it may refine away their dross, and win them all back again on a higher level—such asceticism has a spirit of love pervading it which softens its sternness, removes everything repellent and ungracious, and so produces what we might call the purest quintessence of human feeling. Thus, in the *De Imitatione Christi* we find the utmost renunciation of self, the deepest prostration of humility, the most complete abandonment of every earthly aim and ambition, without any of the crudity and bitterness of Stoicism. And the secret of the difference is that the saint, while he is deeply conscious of suffering and evil in himself and in the world, yet always sees beyond both, and despairs of nothing which he renounces. He has no internecine feud with nature: he believes that she can and will be purified and reconciled. But he is hard to convince that anywhere on earth she has been purified *enough* to make reconciliation possible; and he always listens to her voice with doubt and fear, lest she should turn out to be an enemy in disguise. If, however, he could only be once assured that nature has been refined in the furnace, and that

all the dross of her selfishness has been purged away, he would accept her voice as the voice of God Himself.

One other remark in the same direction may be added. What is called *mysticism* is the great means whereby a religious principle supplements the defects of its own imperfect development, or anticipates the results of a more advanced stage than it has yet attained. It is the form under which feeling discounts the future gains of thought. It is the natural corrective of a rationalistic or dogmatic system, which draws hard lines of division between God and man, between spirit and nature, between finite and infinite. Hence we often find that writers who, in their professed theology, are most zealous to maintain rigidly such defining lines of doctrine, forget them altogether in their devotional utterances. Under the pressure of religious emotion, they disregard all the limitations of their theories, and rise to a region in which the division between God and man becomes, as it were, transparent. Now, this tendency could not fail to show itself with special force under a religion like Christianity, whose first and last word is the unity or reconciliation of the human and the divine. However far, under such a religion, the opposition of the terms may be stretched, pious feeling is always able to overreach it, and to anticipate a solution of the

difficulty which the logic of the time cannot yet admit. In this way in all ages of its history, but particularly in the age in which the dualistic tendency prevailed most completely, the Christian Church was able to escape from its own definitions into a region of inner experience, in which love became its own law. Theology could not restrict the religious life, or hinder the secret movement of the heart from breaking down barriers it had so carefully reared. Nay, we may even say that religious feeling, in this sphere, secured for itself a kind of chartered liberty to rise above all such restraints, however carefully they were otherwise maintained. Dante, who in this respect follows the best teaching of the Church, very often indicates that there is a point at which finite limits fall away; and the soul, rising beyond all the definite thought of the understanding, becomes so identified with its object that no intervening shadow is left. His last words in the *Paradiso* tell us how he prayed to see the inmost truth of the union of the human and the divine. And a vision was granted to him, of three coequal circles of light, which reflected each other, and within one of which there was a figure as of a man; but when he tried to discern how these forms constituted so perfect a unity, his imagination exhausted itself in vain:—

"No wings were mine to compass such a flight;

Till, in a lightning stroke from God, on me
The consummation of my longing came.
Here all the powers of soaring phantasy
Fainted within me: only this I knew
That, like a wheel that neither hastes nor rests,
My will revolved under the sway of Love,
The Love that moves the sun and every star."

Thus devout feeling, embracing its object and losing itself therein, develops an infinite fulness of life which it is totally unable to measure or to express.

After all that has been said it is only going a step farther to recognise that the dualistic form of doctrine and morality, which, in one point of view, seems to be imposed on Christianity from without, may, in another point of view, be regarded as a necessary stage in the development of the Christian idea. For, if we take that idea in its simplest moral meaning, as expressed in the maxim, "die to live," it involves that the higher positive form of spiritual life is reached only through the lower negative form of it; or, in other words, that the lesson of self-renunciation must be fully learnt ere the lesson of self-realisation can be understood in its proper sense. Christianity casts man down in order to raise him up; it seeks to reduce him to that utter surrender of self to God which is necessary ere the divine can manifest itself in him. It was the hard task of the early Christian centuries to set the infinite above and before the

finite, to lay the universal basis of modern civilisation, and to secure it by the most persistent and, we might even say, merciless application of the idea of renunciation to every department of thought and life. To build up a new order on the basis thus secured, and to realise, both in knowledge and in action, the fuller life which in the Middle Ages was postponed to another world, is the task of the modern time. But success could not attend it in this task—not even the imperfect measure of success which it has as yet attained—but for the long discipline of Greek and Latin Christianity.

LECTURE TWELFTH.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIANITY AFTER THE REFORMATION.

Protestantism as a Subjective Religious Movement—Luther and St. Paul—The Protestant Gospel of Freedom—Its One-sidedness—The Extreme of Subjectivity in Rousseau—The Reformation a Compromise between two Principles—Protestant Tendency to get rid of the Objective Element—The Conflict with the Opposite Principle in Roman Catholicism—That the Movement of Recent Times is toward a Reconciliation of the two Great Tendencies of Religion—Hindrances and Aids to Faith in the Present Day.

In the last lecture I pointed out some of the reasons why Christianity in its earlier development was drawn away, as it were, from its centre to the one-sided expression of one of the elements involved in it apart from the other. This was an inevitable consequence of the riches and complexity of its principle. For, as we have seen, Christianity first expressed the religious idea in its own form, as the consciousness of a unity which transcends that opposition of object and subject, of

real and ideal, which had prevailed in the earlier history of religion. It revealed God *as* God, *i.e.* not as an absolute substance which underlies all objective existence, nor as a subject who stands above and apart from all His creatures, but as a Divine Spirit, who, through the whole process of nature and the history of man, is reconciling the world to Himself. Christianity thus took up into itself all the religious life of humanity that existed before, brought it to a higher unity, and started it on a new course of development. But, just because of the depth and comprehensiveness of this thought, which was embodied in the words and life of Jesus, it could only unfold its meaning gradually, in the long struggle of the Church with the world and with itself. For a religious principle is not something which can once for all be stated in a proposition, and seen in all its consequences. It is a seed which works secretly in the minds of those who receive it, and gradually transforms their life and thought, till ultimately, in the long course of years, it produces results which were present to none of those who first accepted it.

Now in this development, as I have indicated, there is a certain alternation which brings into prominence first one, and then the other, of the elements combined in Christianity. For, just because Christianity has in it all the elements of

earlier religions, its development repeats in a new way the whole previous movement of religious history. It passes through a phase in which it becomes—so far as it can do so without ceasing to be a spiritual religion—the worship of an external divine power, revealed in a creed and a law received on authority. And then, by a recoil which reproduces the movement that gave birth to subjective religion, it revolts against the order of life and thought it had itself created, and the external authority it had itself set up; and it appeals to the inward voice of the reason and conscience of the individual, as the sole authority to which he owes unconditional submission. It revives in an intensified form the tendency of later Judaism to oppose the ideal to the real, and to turn away from a world lying under the power of evil, that it may reserve a place for freedom and for God within the soul. Yet, in all this swaying from side to side, to the extreme of objectivity and the extreme of subjectivity, it never quite ceases to be under the control of the Christian idea of reconciliation; and the last result of the process—a result which is manifested in the life and thought of the present day—is to bring this idea once more to the front, and to express and realise it in a more decisive and comprehensive way than it has ever been expressed and realised before. The best literature of the present time—its

highest poetry and philosophy—is thus a reflective reproduction of the different elements of the idea which, in an intuitive and individualised form, was first expressed in the words and works of the founder of Christianity.

This will be more clearly seen if we consider the main phases in the movement of modern thought since the Reformation. The Reformation claimed to be, and in one respect it may be admitted to have been, nothing less than a republication of Christianity. It was a return from the transcendental theology, the dualistic morality, the despotic organisation, and the externally determined faith of the Middle Ages, to the simplicity and directness of the first Christian appeal to the spirit of man—an appeal made in the name of a doctrine which liberated both his intelligence and his will. It once more brought near to man that great goal of Christian hope—the realisation of a kingdom of heaven upon earth—a goal which had been all but lost sight of in the "other-worldliness" of mediæval religion. It broke through the hard walls of division between the secular and the sacred, the world and the Church, which mediæval thought had built up; and, against the exclusive claims of the clergy, it maintained the universal priesthood of all Christians. In opposition to the doctrine that spiritual religion is the special privilege of ascetics, it asserted that men could

live the highest life without breaking away from any of the secular relations, and without removing themselves from any of the ordinary conditions of secular existence. It even asserted that the duties of the family and the State are the necessary forms in which that life must express itself. St. Paul, whose deepest teaching had become lost or obscured during the long centuries in which the successors of the rival apostle, St. Peter, had turned Christianity into an external discipline of life and thought, became again the great prophet of religion. And, indeed, there is no little analogy between the relation of the Pauline Gospel to the Jewish Law, and the relation of Protestantism to Latin Catholicism. St. Paul regarded Judaism as a system of religious tutelage, which had its main value in disturbing the security of the natural man; in awaking him to a sense of the demands of the divine law, and of his own incapacity to fulfil them; and so in preparing him to welcome a gospel that should free him from the weight of conscious guilt, and restore the broken unity of his life. In like manner, the long discipline of Latin Christianity might have been regarded by Luther, as working out in the experience of Christendom that systematic negation of nature which was necessary as a preparation for its new birth out of spirit. Luther, indeed, wanted the philosophic spirit which enabled St. Paul to recognise

that the imperfect system of the past was itself necessary to prepare the way for the higher gospel of the present. But he saw the general analogy between his own position and that of his great predecessor, who, by a decisive stroke, had freed Christianity from the trammels of Judaism, and made it a universal religion. And he felt it to be his own mission to republish the Pauline gospel—that God was revealed in the man Christ Jesus, and that it is the great duty of men still further to reveal Him in all their relations with each other; or, in St. Paul's own language,[1] to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ" for the salvation of mankind. Luther, therefore, regarded the reign of Latin Catholicism as a long postponement of the realisation of Christianity, as a useless revival of the Law which had been superseded by Christ; and he proclaimed the second advent of the religion of freedom and spirit, as the end of man's long bondage to the letter of external observance. Thus the history of modern Europe, and especially of Protestant nations, begins on what we may call a basis of spiritual universality, with a consciousness of the essential equality of men in their equal nearness to God; with a faith that there is nothing

[1] If the Epistle to the Colossians is St. Paul's. At any rate the idea is found also in Phil. iii. 10, "The fellowship of his sufferings." Cf. 2 Cor. i. 5.

common or unclean in the life of man or the life of nature; and with a vivid impulse by the free activity of thought and will to discover and to realise the divine idea in the world. A weight was thus lifted from the soul, which all through the Middle Ages had oppressed and hampered it. The universe had again become to man his Father's house; and "what many prophets and righteous men" had sought to know and to realise, seemed once more to be brought within the reach of all. The kingdom of heaven was at hand, nay, it was actually present, and men did not need to wait for another life to be reconciled to themselves and to God.

The age of the Reformation was thus an age of *Renaissance.* It was an age of renewed faith in God and man, which showed itself not only in religion, but also in science and in political life. Luther's confidence in the results of bringing the soul of the individual into direct contact with the Bible, and Bacon's mighty anticipations of the future of science when man should come face to face with nature, ultimately spring from the same source; and to it we have also to attribute the fresh outburst of political life in the leading peoples of Europe, and the first appearance among them of distinctly national literatures.

While, however, the Reformation was a new proclamation of the gospel of freedom, there is another

aspect of the movement in which it appears less satisfactory. There is a natural illusion by which every great crisis in the development of man seems, to those who experience it, to bring the ultimate goal of human endeavour close to them and even to put it within their grasp. In such times there is a lifting of the spirit which anticipates the slow movement of the years, and turns all men into idealists and optimists, for whom hindrances have almost ceased to exist. These visions of man's better moments are not mere illusions; they may even be said, in the language of Wordsworth, to be "the light of all his seeing"; but they lift man as it were out of the slow time-process of his existence, and make him, by anticipation, grasp at that which can become his only as the fruit of centuries of development. When, however, the crisis has gone by—when man relapses into his ordinary consciousness of the struggle of life, and comes under the pressure of the wants and exigencies of the day and the hour—they are apt to seem to be nothing but dreams that have turned out to be 'too good to be true.' The fact is that, though such visions do, indeed, contain the fruitful germs of the future, their generality at first hides their imperfection, and it is only when they come to be worked out that this defect becomes visible. The ideal, whenever it begins to be realised, has to

encounter obstructions that seem to show its unreality; but what its failure to overcome these hindrances really shows is, that it is not yet 'good *enough* to be true.'

The Reformation was defective, both in itself and as a development of the principle of Christianity, because it over-emphasised the subjective aspect of that principle. The name Protestantism indicates at once the strength and the weakness of the movement. If the defect of the mediæval Church was that it repeated—in so far as was possible without breaking altogether with the fundamental idea of Christianity—the characteristics of objective religion, its dogmatism and superstition, its externality of worship, and its enslavement of the intellect and the will of man; in Protestantism we have a repetition of the same movement of revolt against such a system, the same recoil upon the subject, and the same protest against immediate reality in the interest of an ideal of the soul, which found their highest expression in the later religion of the Jews. Protestantism shows in its best days the same spiritual elevation, the same hostility to rites and ceremonies, and the same tendency to set aside every law or authority that puts itself between the soul of the individual and God, which are characteristic of the great prophets of Israel. In Luther and Calvin and Knox, in Cromwell and William the Silent, it awakens

the same sternness of moral indignation, and the same inflexible faith in a God of Justice—who is not yet revealed, but who will soon reveal Himself—which we find in Isaiah and Jeremiah. Almost all the great deeds of Protestant nations in the two centuries following the Reformation — the early struggles of the German Protestants, the revolt of the Netherlands, the parliamentary and military contests of the Commonwealth in England, the resistance of the Covenanters in Scotland, and the founding of the New England colonies—are due to the same spirit of indignation against every form of oppression and injustice, especially when they touch the religious life of the individual, which shows itself in the later history of Israel. And it is a significant fact that the main agents in these struggles showed a tendency to recur to the teaching of the Old Testament, and even to exalt it at the expense of the New. In short, just as the Christianity of the mediæval Church was a paganised Christianity, a Christianity which had many of the characteristic merits and defects of Polytheism, so it may also be fairly said that the Christianity of the early Protestants was a Judaised Christianity, which had many of the characteristic merits and defects of the Monotheism of Israel.

It may be added that as, in its farther development, Judaism passes from the militant faith

in Jehovah which inspires its earlier history, to the doubts of Job and the despair of Ecclesiastes, and from these to the pessimistic belief that the world is given over to an evil power, which could only be overthrown by a Messianic miracle; so it was also in the development of Protestantism. The tendency to set the inward against the outward, which manifested itself at the Reformation, could not stop short till it had reached the point at which the subjective life of the individual altogether isolates itself from objective interests, and thus empties itself of all content. The soul that has rebelled against all external limitations, soon begins to turn its weapons against itself. The Judaistic Christianity of Calvin is the parent of the sentimental Deism of another great citizen of Geneva, Rousseau, who carried the subjectivity of Protestantism farther perhaps than any other writer. Rousseau fathomed the agonies of a diseased self-consciousness, and discovered that 'he whose eye is ever on himself, doth look on one' who is, if not 'the least,' yet the most miserable of God's creatures. No one ever painted with more force than he the torture of a mind which exhausts all its energies in preying upon itself, conscious at once of an infinite hunger and of entire spiritual emptiness, while yet it is unable to take one step to release itself from the prison-house it has built up around itself.

Yet the same disease of subjectivity, with its disillusionment and its longing for illusion, its world-weariness, and its alternate self-exaltation and self-contempt, has been a frequent theme of modern poetry and fiction.[1] In fact, this disease of introspection and self-contemplation, which puts the exaggerated image of self between the individual and the world, between the individual and his fellowmen, and even between the individual and God, is the great plague of our spiritual life, from which the modern world is only gradually recovering. Our fathers have eaten these sour grapes, and our teeth are still set on edge. And it may safely be said that there is no considerable writer, literary or philosophical, who has not spent much of his work in painting or analysing it: some being themselves its victims, like Byron and Rousseau, like Sénancour or Tourgenieff; others like Kant and Hegel, like Goethe and Wordsworth and Carlyle, pointing with more or less clearness and definiteness to the cure. For in spiritual diseases, at least, it is true that none can find the cure who has not himself suffered, and that the physician must begin by healing himself.

[1] And even Rousseau was partly anticipated by that great Christian pessimist, Pascal, who first entered upon that fatal and deceptive path followed by many since his day, of seeking to prove the truth of Christianity by the aid of the extreme result of scepticism, and so to base faith in God upon distrust of humanity.

Now, what was the defect of Protestantism which thus made it the parent of a self-destructive individualism? It was obviously that it tended not only to exalt the inner at the expense of the outer life, but even to sever the former from the latter. Its tendency was to assert that the kingdom of heaven is within us, in the sense that it is *not* without us; and thus to isolate the individual from the world at the same time that it brought him near to God. This tendency, indeed, at first did not show its full effects; for the leading reformers were deeply penetrated with the spirit and traditions of the Latin Church, and they only challenged its doctrine and ritual so far as was necessary in order to find space for the assertion of the immediate relation of the individual soul to God. In spite of their opposition to Latin Catholicism, therefore, the Protestants took over, as if by inheritance, most of the doctrines and a large part of the practical order of life and worship, which had been elaborated by the Greek and Latin churches. Without any consciousness of inconsistency, they solved the difficulties of the new course on which they were entering by a compromise; and they were content, when they had once asserted the principle of liberty, to accept almost without question the main lines of a dogmatic tradition which rested on the authority of the Church, hiding from themselves what they were

doing by maintaining that all they thus accepted could be derived from the Scriptures. In this, however, they were doubly inconsistent. For, in the first place, the Scriptures contained, at best, only the germs of the doctrines which the Church had developed by a long historical process; and those who entirely repudiated the Church's authority were bound to repeat that whole process for themselves. And, in the second place, to put the authority of the Bible above or alongside of the inner witness of the spirit, was to abandon the essential principle of Protestantism; or, it was to assert two first principles at once.

There is, however, a reason for this apparent unreason, a justification for this illogical combination of the objective and the subjective in religion. It is that both elements are essential to truth and to Christianity, and that an illogical combination of them is, therefore, better than none at all. A spiritual religion undoubtedly involves the assertion of the rights of the individual conscience and consciousness. It is not truly received, so long as it is received on authority—so long as it does not commend itself to the heart and also to the reason of the individual; so long, in short, as it has not become identified with the self-consciousness of him who accepts it. Until in this way the consciousness of God and the consciousness of self have

become one, religion remains an external thing; and the individual's surrender of himself to it is a slavish submission of the will and the intelligence to a foreign yoke. On the other hand, it is equally important to remember that the truth is not at once given in the *immediate* consciousness of the *natural* man. It is attained only as the result of a process in which he surrenders himself to the objective truth of things; and this truth must, in the first instance, seem to be foreign and strange to the mind which apprehends it. The intellectual grasp of truth as self-evident—because inseparably bound up with the consciousness of self—can only be won by a long discipline of self-abnegation, in which the individual gives up his own opinions, his own prejudices and desires, that he may make himself a pure organ of reason. *A fortiori* religious truth, as it appeals to the whole self of man, and as it must therefore be apprehended by all the combined energies of his nature, is no possession that can be attained without effort, without a painful sacrifice of the immediate self, without an irksome discipline of mind and will. "The spiritual man judgeth all things"; but it is only by a new birth and a long process of education, that the spiritual can be developed out of the natural man. Now the Reformers, though they may be taken as the apostles of subjective religion, never entirely lost

hold of this counterbalancing truth. Hence, what Luther and his immediate followers preached was not, as has sometimes been alleged, the *right*, but rather the *duty*, of private judgment: *i.e.* the duty of apprehending spiritual things spiritually, and of undergoing all the discipline of heart and soul and mind which are needed to enable us to do so. And if, on the one hand, Luther declared that no one can be a Christian who does not believe in Christ on the evidence of his own spirit; on the other hand, he equally maintained that no one is naturally and immediately open to this evidence, but that he needs to yield himself to that which is higher than himself ere he can receive it. Luther thus held at once that truth is not truth for me, till I know it for myself on the evidence of my own consciousness; and that my consciousness is no evidence for anything, till it has been changed and transformed by the power of the objective truth. He asserted equally the rights of the object and those of the subject; and it was his misfortune rather than his fault that he could not reconcile them except by a compromise, in which an implicit acceptance of the externally given authority of the Bible as interpreted by the early Church, was combined with the assertion of the right and duty of every individual to interpret it according to his own reason and conscience. He assumed that such

interpretation, if it were fair and honest, would fall in with the results at which the early Church had arrived. He thus supplied *both* the spiritual needs of man, though unfortunately in a way that left them in antagonism to each other. Or, as we may rather express it, not being able to reconcile the rights of the object with those of the subject, he set them in a kind of balance against each other.

Such a balance, however, was sure to be disturbed. It was impossible that two such principles, the principle of subjective independence and the principle of objective authority, principles which were essentially opposed, or for which, at least, no method of reconciliation had been discovered—should remain permanently in equipoise, without any inclination of the scale on one side or the other. And it was natural that Protestantism, as opposition to the principle of authority had been the very reason of its existence, should lean more and more to the subjective side. The many controversies which soon sprang up among Protestants threw doubt upon the self-evidencing nature of the traditional doctrine; and a tendency manifested itself, especially among the sects that arose in the seventeenth century, to lighten the burden that faith had to carry, and to empty the doctrinal system of those elements that seemed most

offensive to the natural understanding.[1] And even among those who nominally clung to orthodoxy, the objective doctrines of Christianity—the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation—were allowed to fall into the background; and the main interest of theology was concentrated upon the subjective aspect of religion, upon questions as to the process of conversion and the nature of saving faith. The inner drama of the soul attracted so exclusive an attention that none seemed to be left for that which had formed the main substance of the earlier theology,—the Christian view of the objective nature of God. Outside of the Churches, the revolutionary assertion of the inward against the outward was carried a step farther. God ceased to be conceived as a self-manifesting Spirit, and became a mere Supreme Being, an absolute Being who was so abstractly conceived that He seemed to be unknowable, since He stood in no definite relation to the concrete life of man. Man, therefore, was no longer called upon to die to himself that he might live to God, or to lose his life that he might find it again in God. On the contrary, Rousseau and others asserted that the natural man had no need to go beyond himself for light or guidance; but that he might find in his own native incorrupt

[1] Cf. my *Essays on Literature and Philosophy*, Rousseau, vol. i. p. 137 *seq.*

instincts a perfect rule of life and a guide to all the moral and religious truth which he required. Such a gospel of mere subjectivity could only lead to one end, the end which we have already described. Reducing himself to himself, and repelling all outward authority or influence as slavery, the individual has no sooner asserted his absolute independence and his sovereignty over himself than he becomes oppressed with the sense of his own emptiness and impotence. And the misery of spiritual loneliness, the tortures of a soul that has nothing to feed on but itself, are the inevitable result.

One consequence of this one-sidedness of Protestantism is, that it has never been able finally to overcome the opposite principle as expressed in Roman Catholicism. The imperfection of the subjective religion of the prophets and psalmists of Israel was shown by its inability to overcome and abolish the legal and ceremonial system of worship to which it was opposed. It needed as its counterpart that externality of observance against which it was ever protesting. In like manner, Protestantism, in spite of its more spiritual idea of religion, has never been able decisively to conquer the less spiritual system of Rome; and it has failed just because of its negative and antagonistic character. It lives in its protest, and so is unable to dispense with that against which it protests. It loses its energy, or

begins to war against itself, whenever it ceases to be in presence of its enemy. It has to thank the principle of authority, against which it protests, for all the positive elements of doctrine that still remain to it; and when it has no longer to contend with the Catholic Church, it reproduces within itself the same conflict of a party of authority and a party of freedom. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic Church by its continuous opposition to Protestantism has been severing itself more and more from the advancing movement of civilisation. It has been forced to live more and more on its past; and almost none of the fresh voices of literature, none of the new inspirations of poetry or of the new teachings of philosophy, have originated within the range of its influence, or except in opposition to it. But *it* has preserved that rich tradition of Christian antiquity which the subjective spirit of Protestantism has tended to cast aside. It may estrange the soul from itself, but at least it does not make it die of inanition, or live upon mere aspiration after the unattainable. Although, therefore, the intelligence of Europe has been more and more divorced from it, it has remained, and still remains, as the necessary counterpart and complement of Protestantism, opposing the one-sidedness of matter without form to the opposite one-sidedness of form without matter. Thus the life of modern Christendom

has suffered, and is still suffering from an antagonism, like that of the Law and the Prophets—an antagonism which must continue till the advent of a higher manifestation of the Christian principle, by which the two opposing tendencies shall be reconciled and united.

It is our lot to live in a time in which the highest problem of religion, the problem of the reconciliation of the consciousness of self with the consciousness of the world through the consciousness of God, has again come up for solution, as it came up for solution once before at the dawn of Christianity. But it has now to be solved under very different conditions. Then it had only to meet the wants of a religious consciousness which grasped the truth intuitively in its unity, without seeking to analyse it or to give any definite account of the logical relation of its elements, and which required no such intellectual process to satisfy it of the reality of its object. Now we have other needs, but we have also other means of satisfying them. By the long process of the development of human thought, we are now put in such a position that we can bring to the light of critical reflexion the principle, which has been working latently in all the imperfect forms of the religion of the past, and which finds its culminating expression in Christianity. The evolution of Christianity itself has made it possible for us to understand, and therefore to repeat in a conscious

way—with a clear apprehension of the meaning of what we are doing—the process by which Christianity at once fulfilled and destroyed the other forms of religion with which it was brought into contact. As in its first dawn, Christianity again is beginning to show itself, not in its negative but in its positive aspect; not as a subjective principle which sets the spiritual against the natural, the inner religion of the heart against the outer religion of the letter, the witness of the spirit against the voice of authority; but as a principle, at once subjective and objective, which reveals itself not only within but also without us, which is immanent in nature and in man, and which is working in him to still higher issues. But this lesson, wrapped up at the dawn of Christianity in types and symbols borrowed from an earlier faith, and apprehended only by feeling, or at best by an imaginative intuition which had no means of explaining itself, is now becoming a reasoned conviction which can understand and criticise its own nature and evidence. The principle of Christianity has come to self-consciousness, and it is therefore capable of being held without that mixture of illusion which was inevitable in an earlier age. In the process of its own history, it has been working itself free of the alien elements which were mingled with it at first; and now, as I believe, it exists in many minds as a simple faith in God and man,

in God's revelation of Himself in man, and man's capacity to become the further manifestation of God and to work His work—a faith which does not need any extraneous support from vision or miracle. To those who regret the implicit faith of an earlier day, which is gradually leaving us, it may be suggested that, useful as such extraneous supports have been in the past, they never were really the essence of the matter; and, though it might be necessary, in the slow education of man's spirit, for him to lean upon them, yet there is always a heavy price to be paid for the strength which is gained partly by illusion. The religious wars and persecutions of Christendom, the perverse attempts of those who had mislearnt the Christian doctrine of self-sacrifice to reduce morality to a useless asceticism, the superstitious fears and hopes, which withdrew Christians from the service of man or distorted their conception of the nature of that service, were the necessary results of the imperfection of 'the earthly vessels' in which the truth of Christianity was first presented to the world. And, if it has now become possible in some measure to detach such wood and hay and stubble from the gold and silver and precious stones of the temple built upon the foundation of Christ; if it has become possible to recognise that the principle of Christ's gospel—the moral and spiritual truths it contains—require nothing ex-

traneous to themselves, nothing but their coherence with the reason and conscience of man, to commend them to us—and that indeed they can have no valid evidence but this coherence—we need not fear that this, in the long run, will weaken the hold of religion or even of Christianity upon the human soul. The process of transition from a faith which is based upon external evidence, to one which is based on the rational interpretation of man's experience, must no doubt be a hard and difficult one, and in many cases it may bring with it no little danger to the moral life; but it is the necessary path to a religion which is pure of superstition, and undefiled by fanaticism; which can face without illusion the simple but wonderful facts of human life and the mysterious shadow of death. It is the path and the only path to a religion which can interpret to man the strange precarious destiny which it is given to him to fulfil in this world, as a finite being whose consciousness of himself is yet bound up with the consciousness of the infinite—a being who, from one point of view, seems hardly to have escaped from the bonds of animal life, while yet from another he is seen to draw his life immediately from the divine, and, in a sense that cannot apply to any other creature, to 'live and move and have his being' in God.

In these lectures it has been my endeavour to

explain and illustrate a view of man's life which I believe to be in accordance with the essential principle of religion and of Christianity, and at the same time the necessary result of the best lights of philosophy which have been given to our time. This view may be summarised in a few words. It starts with the principle, first clearly expressed by Kant, that the objective world can be understood only in relation to the unity of the self within us, and it goes on to infer that in self-consciousness we find at once the culmination and the explanation of that world. It argues that, on this principle, the historical movement, in which man transforms nature and makes it the basis for the spiritual process of his own life, is to be regarded only as a farther step in the manifestation and evolution of the principle that conditions and underlies nature; and further, that the moral ideal which arises out of this historical movement, and seems to condemn as imperfect even the highest result attained by it, is not to be merely contrasted with it as that which 'ought to be' with that which 'is,' but rather as the clearest expression of the same power that produced the present state of things out of a still more imperfect past. It, therefore, concludes that our highest moral and social ideal—reached, as it has been, as the result of all the thought and labour and pain of humanity in the past—is not visionary or illusive, but may be taken as our best

key to the nature of the universe of which we are a part, and to the nature of the Divine Being who is its source and its end. And it derives from this a deeper consciousness of the nearness of God to man, a confirmation of the Christian faith that the kingdom of heaven is in the midst of us, and that the service of humanity is the true and the only service of God. If, therefore, we can discern in modern literature and in life any deepening of the consciousness that man is his brother's keeper, and that the life of man is of infinite worth because it is indeed the highest expression of the infinite, we need not fear that the many doubts and uncertainties of the present time, or the seeming negation of many of the articles of the old creed of Christendom, indicate a revolt of mankind against that which is vital in Christianity. For this belief, in the revelation of God in man, in itself constitutes the *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae.* It is the rock upon which the Christian Church is really founded, and from which it could be built up again if every ecclesiastical organisation that exists were destroyed. The infinite pitifulness of Jesus to the sorrows and evils of humanity, his absolute confidence in the possibility and even the necessity of their being remedied, and the way in which he bases his confidence on the love of God to man, and on his own unity as man with God—these,

taken together. make up a faith beyond which religion cannot go, except in two ways, namely, in the way of understanding them more adequately, and of realising them more fully. And in both these ways, the present age, in spite of all the evils that afflict it, has gone beyond any previous age. For, on the one hand, the whole development of the organic and evolutionary idea of the world as interpreted by idealistic philosophy, and applied by criticism to the history of Christianity and of other religious systems, has for the first time furnished us with something like a rational proof of a creed which previously rested almost entirely upon the intuition of faith, and which, therefore, was generally mixed up with many elements of unreason. And, on the other hand, the humanitarian impulse of the present day—in so far as it has ceased to be a mere abstract cosmopolitan charity, or a religious zeal that ends with the spread of religion; in so far as it is guided by a deeper conviction that men must find salvation *here* as well as *hereafter*, and by a fuller understanding of all the physical and economical, all the intellectual and moral conditions of its attainment,—reproduces in a higher form the passionate impulse to seek and save the lost which Christianity brought into the world. For it means by saving, not merely consolation in this life and hope for another, but the discovery of

the way by which all men, even the lowest and most wretched, may be made sharers in the great heritage of humanity; by which even those who have hitherto been hewers of wood and drawers of water or a civilisation of which they did not partake, may become integral members in an organic human society. The great aims that are dawning upon us are, therefore, on the one hand, to *discover* more and more fully the ideal meaning of the world, not merely through imaginative symbols that are opposed or indifferent to science, but with the fullest satisfaction of the requirements of scientific criticism; and, on the other hand, to *realise* the whole good of man's complex nature, by the association of men with each other in those better forms of co-operation and communion with each other, which alone can turn the growing necessities of our lives into a higher manifestation of freedom. Such a union of intelligence and charity may well be called a new Christianity. At any rate it is the only religion that will fully realise the idea of religion, and so meet the wants of the new time.

No sooner, however, do we sketch out such an ideal, than our minds are at once overshadowed by a sense of the slowness of our progress towards the goal which it anticipates. We may perhaps persuade ourselves that it is the result to which the whole movement of the time is pointing; but to us, to whom 'one day is' *not* 'as a thousand years' it seems to come

so slowly that we are tempted to doubt whether it comes at all, whether it is not altogether an illusion. We may be advancing towards a higher comprehension of the ideal meaning of the world and of human life. But how crude, it will be said, how crude and discordant are the voices of most of those who claim to speak for modern science and philosophy; and how abstract and vague is the utterance even of the best religious and ethical thought of our time, as it expresses itself in our greatest poets and thinkers. Where is there anything like the passionate and triumphant spiritualism of St. Paul, or the simple penetrating intuition of Jesus, that saw good through evil, and a divine purpose realising itself in all the confusions of human life? Where is the poet who rises high enough in his song to unite the feelings and desires and hopes of our time with the divine, as the Hebrew psalmist was able to unite them for his time; or the philosopher who can combine a thorough grasp of the facts of experience, as they have been analysed by modern science, with the idealism that "sees all things in God"? And, on the other hand, when we turn to the practical life, where is the religious zeal whose heat is not hostile to light, or the enlightenment whose intelligence has not paralysed its will? Where is the practical Christianity, which can go beyond the beaten round

of the religious life of the past to cope with all the unsolved problems of the present, without losing itself in anarchy, revolt, and nihilism; or in vague socialistic schemes which, even if they could succeed, would satisfy only the hunger of the body? And, indeed, no one can say that the ideal of such a theoretical and such a practical life has yet been realised, even in the sense and to the degree in which the ideals of the past have been realised. All that we *can* say is, that men are beginning to awake to the need for its realisation, and that there have been already anticipations of it in a few lives here and there. We must, however, remember that it is just because the ideal which is now set before us is the highest and most comprehensive that ever was presented to mankind, that it requires a longer and more difficult process to attain it. We, upon whom 'the ends of the world are come' in a deeper sense than even upon the early Christians, must necessarily have to encounter the hardest problems of thought and life. And we can console ourselves by reflecting that the reason of the slowness of our progress towards their solution lies most of all in the fact, that every step toward such a good must be won by the effort of man's whole being, by the whole energy of his intelligence and will; and that, indeed, no real gain is possible for man which is not *so* won. Farther, though the movement of pro-

gress may be imperceptible, if we look merely to our own time—for now as ever the kingdom of God cometh not with observation—yet distinct signs of it may be discerned, if not from year to year, at least from century to century, on the great scale of the secular movement of history. And a study of that history in the light of the idea of evolution, if it leaves many things dark and obscure, may yet enable us, with the certitude of a faith which is already on the way to knowledge, to say with Galileo, *E pur si muove.* In particular, the study of the history of religion, from the lowest form, in which it begins to furnish at least some crude idea of the nature of the world and the Power that rules over it, and some elementary bond of social union, up to the highest form of the Christian belief in a spiritual principle which manifests itself in nature and in the growing life of humanity, is a real and living support to our religious faith. This long, unhasting, unresting process of the evolution of religion is itself the best evidence we can have that there is a divine meaning in the world, and that mankind have not laid the sacrifice of their efforts and their thoughts, their prayers and their tears, upon the altar of an unknown or unknowable God.

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VOLUME I.

P. 31, last line—*For* "in the finite" *read* "in the infinite."
P. 122, line 10—*For* "to the second" *read* "of the second."
P. 164, line 14—*For* "even" *read* "ever."
P. 184, line 20—*For* "subjects" *read* "objects."
P. 197, line 18—*For* "informs" *read* "impels."
P. 264, line 15—*For* "as" *read* "so."
P. 274, line 11—*For* "puny" *read* "pigmy."
P. 279, line 1—*For* "of spiritual" *read* "of *a* spiritual."
P. 283, line 7—*For* "from" *read* "and."
P. 299, line 6—*For* "by" *read* "from."
P. 337, line 13—*For* "agrees" *read* "argues."
P. 354, line 14—*Insert* "is" *after* "pantheism."
P. 359, Note, line 1—*For* "of the East" *read* "of Asia."

VOLUME II.

P. 20, line 29—*For* "nature's spite" *read* "reason's spite."
P. 39, line 18—*Before* "seen" *insert* "been, who hath not yet."
P. 71, line 8—Omit "the."
P. 78, line 14—*Insert* "the" *before* "highest."
P. 83, Footnote—*For* "64" read "94."
P. 150, line 18—*For* "His *immediate*" *read* "his *immediate*."
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